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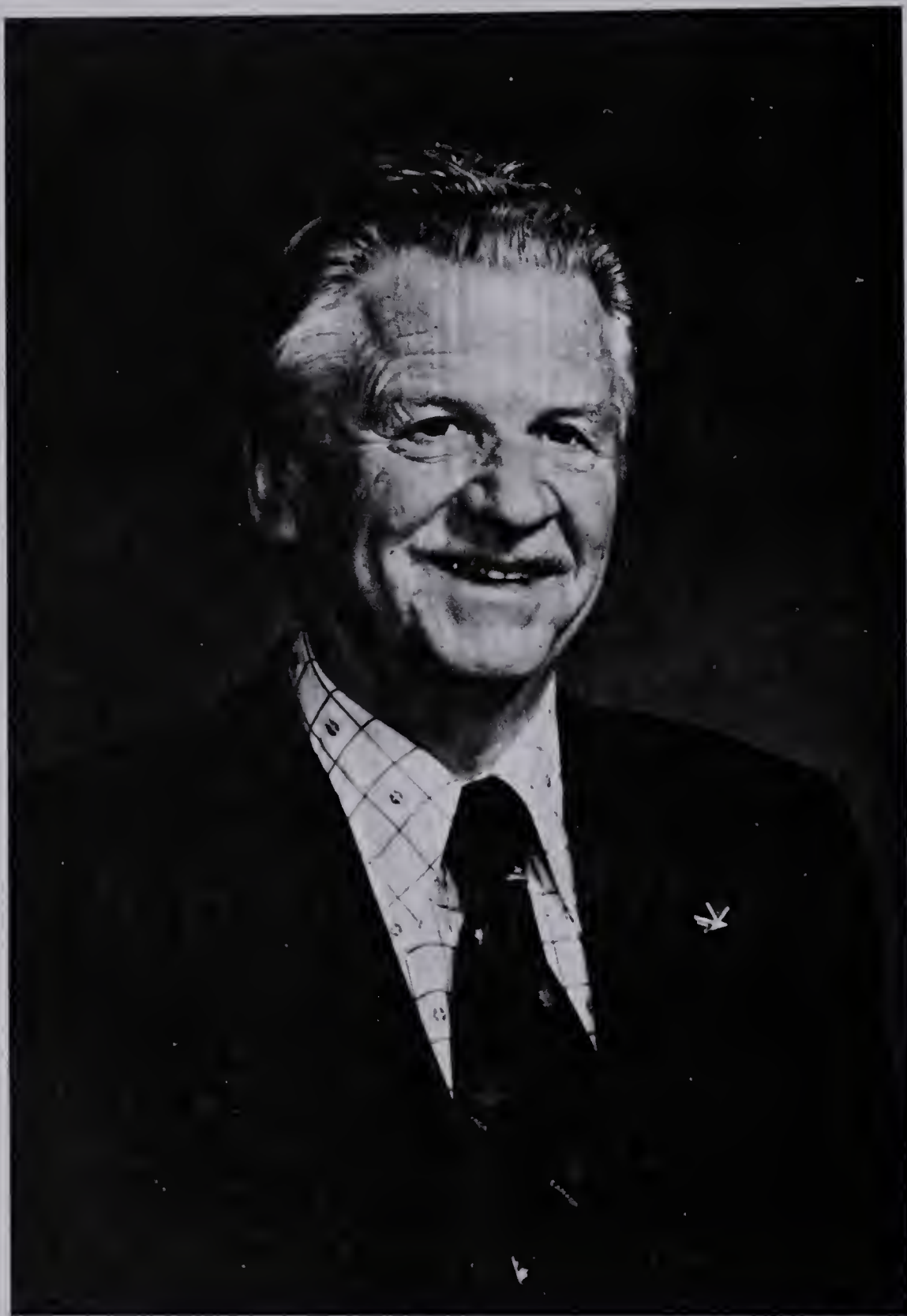
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MAURICE LEWIS VAN VLIET



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A HISTORY OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF  
MAURICE LEWIS VAN VLIET  
FROM 1945 TO 1978

by

KATHARINE E. MOORE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1980



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled A HISTORY OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MAURICE LEWIS VAN VLIET FROM 1945 TO 1978, submitted by KATHARINE E. MOORE, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Physical Education.





## DEDICATION

To my mother, Joyce Lees Moore, whose  
constant support has enabled me to learn  
and appreciate the true value of education



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to record and assess the professional contributions of Maurice Lewis Van Vliet from 1945 to 1978. His involvement in the broad field of amateur sport, recreation, and physical education in Canada was divided into four major areas:

- (1) Within the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta
- (2) General campus involvement at The University of Alberta
- (3) In various professional organizations
- (4) XI Commonwealth Games.

Written sources were examined first, and then a questionnaire was used to gather information from individuals knowledgeable about Dr. Van Vliet's professional activities.

Based on the data collected and presented, it was concluded that Dr. Van Vliet made significant contributions in all four of the areas described above, and that overall, Maurice Lewis Van Vliet exerted more influence on the broad professional field of physical education, recreation, and amateur sport than did any other individual in Canada in the 35 years since the end of World War II.





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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction and Purpose

There had been only two degree courses in physical education {in Canada} at the close of the war; now an explosion of similar programs took place. Degree courses were followed by graduate degree courses at the Master's level, then at the doctoral level. While physical education was striving in some provinces to become a recognized entity, in others it was identified as a full-fledged faculty in the universities (Cosentino and Howell, 1971:58).

Since its establishment in 1908, The University of Alberta has grown both in size and stature. During this expansion, several university faculties have gained impressive academic reputations; included among these is the present Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation. This faculty has grown and developed to the point where both its undergraduate and graduate programmes are recognized as being among the best in Canada.

When Maury Van Vliet arrived at The University of Alberta in September 1945, he was the only staff member in the Department of Physical Education. When he resigned as Dean in 1975, retaining his rank of Professor while heading the XI Commonwealth Games, the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation had an academic staff of 55 and a prominent reputation.

Although the influence of one man cannot be given as the sole reason for the tremendous growth of physical education and recreation in any institution, an examination of Maury Van Vliet's professional activities can provide a great deal of insight into the growth of



physical education and recreation as an academic discipline at The University of Alberta. However, like most professionals, Van Vliet involved himself in many outside organizations. This study will record and assess the professional contributions of Maury Van Vliet from 1945 to 1978 in four major areas:

1. Within the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta
2. General university involvement at The University of Alberta
3. Various external organizations
4. XI Commonwealth Games

As used in this study, "professional contribution" may be defined as improving the quality of one's chosen career area.

#### Significance of the Study

Although Dr. Van Vliet's involvement in the XI Commonwealth Games was undoubtedly his most visible world-wide role, he has spent his entire adult life promoting and providing leadership for amateur sport, physical education, and recreation in Canada. Dr. Van Vliet's retirement from The University of Alberta on August 3, 1978, marked the end of his 'formal' involvement in physical education in Canada, so it seems appropriate at this time to record his lifelong contributions in the field. The significance of the present study is that it documents the professional contributions of a determined, dedicated, and sometimes controversial individual in the field of amateur sport, physical education, and recreation in Canada.

#### Justification for the Study

In the introduction to her thesis on John Howard Crocker, Keyes





(Note 1) stated that little had been written about the history of physical education in Canada. More historical research has been carried out in the ensuing 15 years, but the history of physical education in Canada has yet to be fully documented. The present study is intended as another step in that direction.

Allan Nevins (1938:34) has written that "not seldom is biography the best means of gaining an introduction to an historical period; almost invariably it is the best means of filling out the human meaning of any era." An integral part of any history includes the personalities who exercise leadership and give direction to their chosen fields. By closely examining such personalities, one can often trace the development of an institution or organization. Such is the case with Maury Van Vliet. The study will focus on Dr. Van Vliet's professional contributions at The University of Alberta, in various professional organizations, and in connection with the XI Commonwealth Games. "Knowledge of history and of the contributions made by individuals in the past may offer increased perspective toward understanding contemporary events" (Meyer, 1975:1, Note 2). Walton (1976:3, Note 3) concluded: "There continue to be disturbing gaps in the historical recording of the development of physical education in Canada." Given the prominent role played by Dr. Van Vliet in the development of the field of physical education, amateur sport and recreation in Canada, one of those gaps may be filled by the present study.

### Limitations

Several limitations have been identified which will affect the study:



1. Availability of primary documentary sources
2. Reluctance of those interviewed or responding to the questionnaire, to offer data which might be interpreted as negative in nature
3. Memories of those subjects interviewed
4. Author being unable to interview all individuals who could make valuable contributions to the study
5. The fact that Dr. Van Vliet was alive and professionally active at the time the study was conducted may have influenced the responses of some of the contributors
6. Difficulty in establishing historical perspective.

### Delimitations

The study has been delimited as follows:

- i) Time period: September 1945 to August 1978
- ii) The main focus will be on Dr. Van Vliet's professional life - a biographical chapter is included as background information for the reader
- iii) A number of persons were interviewed. It was not possible to interview everyone who worked with Dr. Van Vliet so the writer had to be selective and interview those people who knew Maury Van Vliet well professionally, had worked closely with him, and who were available to provide information.

### Method of Investigation

The research design has two parts:

- a) To read and analyze all identified written sources pertaining to the four sub-areas outlined in the purpose of the study
- b) To conduct interviews with knowledgeable people in order to augment written sources.

The 33 years of professional activity that are under investigation have been divided into five-year time periods to allow for in-depth analysis and classification. An effort was made to match written sources



and possible interview subjects by time periods so that research could be carried out in a logical and orderly manner. However, this artificial division into time periods was only utilized in the collection of information. The individual chapters in the study were written chronologically, and the overall thesis was topically arranged.

A questionnaire was designed to facilitate data collection. It consisted of 14 question areas which were intended as starting points for discussion rather than specific questions. The individual supplying the information was free to interpret these question areas as he/she wished. The preferred procedure for collecting data was through a personal, tape recorded interview. When the individual could not be interviewed in person, the questionnaire and a blank tape cassette were mailed out, and the person had the choice of recording a response on tape or providing a written response to the questionnaire. Individual interview schedules were designed for each personal interview with Dr. Van Vliet; all other contributors answered a standard questionnaire (Appendix A). In all cases, those people interviewed saw the questionnaire prior to the interview, and had time to consider how they might respond.

Pennington (Note 4) outlined what he termed the 'standard biographical method' of approaching a study of this sort. This methodology had been previously described and used by Bronson (Note 5) and Collins (Note 6) and involves four steps:

1. Discovery and collection of source materials
2. Classification of source materials
3. External and internal criticism of source materials
4. Interpretation of source materials.

This biographical method was utilized in the present study. Factual





information concerning the professional contributions of Maury Van Vliet was compiled, classified, criticized, and interpreted; then the study was written. External and internal criticism were applied both to documentary and human sources. Although numerous individuals contributed data for this study, the conclusions drawn and the judgments made are the sole responsibility of the writer.

## Review of Literature

### General Biography

Alan Nevins (1938:326) suggested that all well-written biographies possess at least one common trait:

The chief requirement of a really good biography is that it recreate an individual, convincing the reader that he lived, moved, spoke, and enjoyed a certain set of human attributes. We must not merely be shown what he did, but what he was, and why he was that kind of man. In other words, his inner soul, or at least his personality, must be revealed.

This mid-twentieth century view of biography has a long and colourful history, and only a few highlights can be included here. In the ancient world, Thucydides (The Peloponnesian War, written in the fifth century B.C.) and Suetonius (The Lives of the Caesars) both wrote histories filled with anecdotes and biographical excerpts. But it was Plutarch, a contemporary of Suetonius', who was considered the supreme figure of ancient biography (Garraty, 1957:43). His Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans (written in the first century A.D.) presented a new point of view for biographical writing. Plutarch's ultimate goal was always understanding, and he realized that it could be achieved only by sympathy, insight, and hard work (Garraty, 1957:43).

"Biography as an art form was static in the Middle Ages"





(Stauffer, 1930:3). By the eleventh century hagiography, the study of the lives of saints, was a widely recognized form of literature. The pattern for writing an account of the life of a saint became firmly established: "Around the barest of facts about each holy man {the biographers} clustered miraculous tales of sin punished, illness cured, pagan converted, and faith restored, always through the sanctity of the protagonist of the story" (Garraty, 1957:56-57). Stauffer (1930:3) suggested that developments or modifications in the practice of writing lives of saints were rare.

Beginning in the fourteenth century, the rise of humanism provided a great stimulus for the writing of biography (Garraty, 1957:62). However, the works that were written did not clearly distinguish between 'lives' and 'histories'. "The Renaissance has been described as the reawakening of interest in the individual" (Stauffer, 1930:33). In the seventeenth century, Izaak Walton did much to develop a unified biographical technique. His five biographies have stood out as examples of extensive research, respect for truth, feeling for character, and a good measure of literary artistry (Garraty, 1957:74). Walton embodied both the medieval characteristics of piety and moralizing, as well as the modern ones of honesty and artfulness. His work signalled a new age in biography. "The seventeenth century witnessed a heightened interest in personalities" (Stauffer, 1930:269). The eighteenth century saw an explosion in the number of biographies written. The desire to moralize, a prime motive in the past, was challenged by simple curiosity, and every person became a possible subject for a book. "Neither the living nor the dead were safe, and now, not even the humble" (Stauffer,



1941:508). Biographers of that age were very curious about mankind, and many authors studied their subjects closely before writing. Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson was an excellent example of this technique.

Garraty maintained (1957:97) that no startling methodological developments occurred in biographical writing until early in the present century. A major question raised in the late nineteenth century, which remains with us today, involved the ethics of biography. Sigmund Freud did much to give frankness and openness a new life in biographical writing, but it was Lytton Strachey who set the stage for a new era of biography in the twentieth century.

With the publication of Eminent Victorians in 1918, biography had charted a new course. Strachey took dead aim on four Victorian respectables and exposed their 'true' characters to the world. "He stimulated the reading of lives and convinced the public that hero worship was not only stupid. . . but dull" (Garraty, 1957:124). Strachey's work provided the basis for a new type of biography, one that featured malice, contempt for hero worship, and a delight for stripping off overstuffed reputations. "His attack on the Victorian era was the voice of a great disillusion, and fell upon the world in the bitterest year of disillusion in modern history" (Nevins, 1938:333). Predictably, there was an eventual rejection of this type of exposé biography as well, and the 1940s showed a sharp decline in the number of biographies written and read. But by the mid 1950s, a new conception of biography had appeared, "combining the research and scholarly integrity of conservative scholars with the imaginative artistic qualities and readability of the popular writer of the twenties" (Tolles, 1954:520). The popularity of biography was on the upswing once more.



Even a cursory examination of biographical writing in the present day will reveal a startling panorama of subjects and styles. There is no one universally accepted pattern for writing a biography today, but there are sound principles upon which serious biographers are in general agreement. James Parton (Garraty, 1957:244-246) outlined six rules to follow when writing a biography:

1. Know the subject thoroughly.
2. Index fully all the knowledge in existence relating to it.
3. Determine beforehand where to be brief, where to expand, and how much space can be given to each part; the art is, to be short where the interest is small, and long where the interest is great.
4. Work slowly and finish as you go.
5. Avoid eulogy and apology and let the facts have their natural weight.
6. Hold back nothing which the reader has a right to know - be honest and candid.

Although these rules may appear somewhat broad and general, they are a good outline for the writing of biography. Perhaps it is impossible to standardize biographical techniques, but Parton's rules provided a starting point for a biographer, as Garraty (1957:258) indicated:

What a biographer must do is relatively easy to describe; how he is to do it in a particular case defies explanation. From the multiplicity of facts he must select what logic and controlled imagination tell him is typical and significant. He must be an impartial judge, remembering always that while judges should be fair, they must make decisions. . . . He can do this if his chief objective is to understand - only then can he explain without either apology or condemnation, be sympathetic without lapsing into partisanship.

A great deal of literature has appeared in the second half of the twentieth century which deals with the problems of producing a biography. A central question involved the problem of objectivity. "The conviction held by some historians of the possibility of complete





objectivity in the selection of evidence is an illusion. Every re-creation of character represents subjective judgment on the part of the creator" (Clifford, 1970:110). In biographical writing, as in any historical work, it is important to understand the motives and background of the author.

The author's attitude toward the subject is also very important. Garraty (1957:164) stated that "most first-rate biographies have been written by persons sympathetic to their subjects. This does not mean apology or eulogy; it means that the chief goal has been understanding." Plutarch had the same goal almost 2,000 years ago. The conscientious biographer does not hide the subject's faults, and does not pass over discreditable episodes or stifle unfriendly witnesses; truth will do the subject more credit than any deliberate facade. Although it is virtually impossible to be completely impartial, the writer of a biography must seek to reveal the truth about the subject. James Clifford (1959: 390), himself an author of several biographies, made a final point about perhaps the largest problem in biographical writing:

A biographer must weigh the evidence and decide. For every sentence he abstracts from a longer letter, for every word that he takes out of complete context, he must make a personal decision. He may himself be unaware of what is going on. He may be under the illusion that he is being objective. But actually from millions of small choices he is fashioning his own portrait of another man. In order to make all these decisions properly the different kinds of skill he must have are almost staggering. Perhaps the very awareness of this frightening complexity is itself an encouraging sign. Although the goals are more difficult, the challenge therefore is greater.

### Physical Education Biography

André Maurois (1929:204) speculated about the future forms that biographical writing might take. He concluded it would always be a difficult form of literary expression because "we demand of it the





scrupulosity of science and the learned falsehoods of history. Much prudence and tact are required to concoct this unstable mixture." Like any other form of human expression, biographical writing will continue to grow, branch out, and take new directions. One such branch is the emergence of biographical studies focusing on individual contributions in specific areas of academic interest. The field of physical education has recently displayed a greater interest in recording the lives and contributions of prominent professionals. More and more biographical accounts of physical educators are now being written, and although most of them appear in limited circulation as unpublished theses or dissertations, the contributions of professionals are being recorded. A great number of biographies of physical educators have been produced by graduates in the United States, and three of these studies (by John Behee, Iona Grosshans, and G. Gary Pennington) will be examined in detail. Only five examples of full-length biographies of Canadian physical educators have been located (on E. M. Cartwright, J. H. Crocker, A. S. Lamb, R. T. McKenzie, and J. Naismith), and each of these studies will be examined.

It is valuable for any writer to examine works by other authors, especially ones that involve a similar area of interest. The eight studies that are highlighted here all sought to relate the important contributions of individuals to the profession of physical education. These studies were particularly helpful in establishing an approach to the problem, as well as in formulating the methodology, organization, and style of the present study. In each work, the character of the individual was extensively researched, as well as that individual's influence on his/her environment. All the authors have investigated



the contributions of these leaders in physical education, and in some cases have made judgments about the subject's character and career relative to the profession. Each investigator chose to emphasize what he/she considered the most outstanding contributions of his/her subject.

Three studies done in the United States have been selected for closer examination because of the methodologies employed and the subjects that were examined. The studies are: Fielding Yost's Legacy to the University of Michigan by John Behee (1971); "Delbert Oberteuffer: His Professional Activities and Contributions to the Fields of Health and Physical Education" by Iona Grosshans (Note 7); and "Frederick Rand Rogers: Educational Provocateur" by G. Gary Pennington (Note 4).

John Behee stated in the first chapter of his book (1971:1) that "because of the great sentiment that became synonymous with Yost's name to so many, it is hard to separate actual contributions from idealization." From the beginning, Behee realized he was involving himself in a large undertaking, but he wanted to investigate the legacy of Yost to the University of Michigan and its basis in historical fact. He called the investigation a "dubious privilege," but Behee was convinced the study needed to be done. What emerged was a human portrait of a professional: "Its real strength lies in the candor with which Yost's achievements and human frailties are equally portrayed" (1971: Foreword). Behee concluded that determining where Fielding Yost and his proponents had been too laudatory and his opponents too disparaging made the measurement of his legacy to the University of Michigan very challenging. Very few people had a noncommittal attitude about Yost; it seemed a person was either fiercely loyal to him or strongly opposed



to his ideas and actions.

Behee had access to the University of Michigan - Athletic Papers, which proved to be a valuable primary resource. Other primary sources included newspapers, magazines, published reports, books, and interviews. Secondary sources included histories of the University of Michigan, histories of physical education and athletics at the University of Michigan, histories of American football, histories of physical education in the United States, and dissertations. The book was divided topically into chapters, and each chapter followed a chronological format. Chapter headings included: A Biographical Sketch; The Years as University of Michigan Football Coach; The Years as Director of Athletics; Michigan Builds a 'Showcase' of Athletic Facilities; and Yost and Physical Education. Behee did an excellent job of giving the reader an all-round look at a controversial and well-known figure in the profession.

A major point concerning the significance of Iona Grosshans' study on Delbert Oberteuffer was found in the introduction to the work: "It would be impossible to look back and re-evaluate the past 50 years in health education and physical education without being impressed by Delbert Oberteuffer's contributions" (1975:3-4). She felt her subject was a unique, multitalented man, completely dedicated to the point of view that health education and physical education should affect the total individual. Dr. Oberteuffer provided data for all aspects of the study, and Grosshans also examined speeches, articles, textbooks, and personal documents, as well as holding personal tape recorded interviews. She identified eight areas of Dr. Oberteuffer's personal life and professional activities, and these areas became the bases for chapters





in the dissertation: Oregon Childhood; The Making of an Educator; An Opportunity in Ohio; Delbert Oberteuffer at the Ohio State University; Physical Activities Culminating in the Gulick Award; Earning the Howe Award in Health Education; and Formulation of Life-long Points of View. In the final chapter, Grosshans included an appraisal of Dr. Oberteuffer and his professional contributions, and she discussed his professional strengths and weaknesses in a candid manner.

Grosshans devised a basic set of interview questions, and added, adapted, or deleted questions as the situation changed for each individual contributing to the study. The collected data were classified according to primary or secondary sources, and subjected to external and internal criticism. She produced a thorough, well-researched, and realistic account of the life and professional contributions of a prominent individual in the field.

Gary Pennington (1972:5) took on an enormous task in presenting a "factual and comprehensive statement concerning the life and work of a complex and dynamic, albeit at times controversial, figure in the profession." His purpose was to present an accurate and detailed account of events in the professional life of Frederick Rand Rogers, and to set forth his beliefs and contributions in a manner which would facilitate proper evaluation. Pennington offered a frank discussion of Rogers' strengths and weaknesses, and evaluated his contributions based on the evidence presented. Nevertheless, he concluded that despite all the available documents, letters, press clippings, and anecdotes, it was not easy to know or describe Rogers. "He leaves a diffuse, enigmatic image" (1972:706).





Pennington's sources included visitations and interviews, Rogers' publications, correspondence with the subject, questionnaires and letters, university records, and expert opinion. The study was organized both chronologically and topically, and the chapter headings included: Family, Youth, and Early Education 1894-1914; Professional Studies and Early Teaching 1914-1926; State Director in New York 1926-1931; Boston University 1931-1940; Later Endeavors 1940-1971; Writings, Addresses, Professional Association Activities; Fundamental Beliefs and Contributions; Perspectives on the Man and His Work; and A Final Profile.

Based on the evidence presented in the study, Pennington drew an interesting and revealing conclusion: "He is a man of very real substance and great intellectual curiosity. Rogers is a mystery - a nearly unfathomable blend of intellect, humor, humility, and arrogance. Always he is his own man" (1972:720). Pennington felt Rogers' contributions had been largely ignored, and his study stood as documentary evidence to support the claim that "Rogers is likely the most colorful and controversial figure in the short history of physical education in the United States" (1972:720). He presented a detailed, straightforward account of a controversial subject, and he was able to draw conclusions based on the evidence presented.

#### Canadian Physical Education Biography

In his study about A. S. Lamb, Eaton (Note 8) claimed that historical research in physical education in Canada was practically non-existent. Unfortunately, as far as biography is concerned, this still holds true in 1980. Only five full-length studies have been located which deal with the professional contributions of Canadian



physical educators. All of these studies have recorded the careers of deceased Canadian physical educators who, for the most part, were influential in central and eastern Canada. Some studies have made serious attempts to produce realistic accounts of professional lives; others have been more eulogistic in nature. The sheer lack of numbers of works in the area of Canadian physical education biography indicates that more studies need to be undertaken before a comprehensive history of physical education in Canada can be attempted.

In the abstract of her 1976 study, Yvette Walton (Note 3) stated that the purpose of the work was to document the contributions to physical education made by Ethel Mary Cartwright and to acquaint readers with the personal qualities and philosophy of one of the pioneers of the profession in Canada. She went on to say that the scope of Ethel Mary Cartwright's role in the development of physical education in Canada was so significant that the historic record of the profession could never be considered complete unless her contributions were fully reported. Walton made numerous judgments and drew several conclusions concerning Ethel Mary Cartwright's true worth to Canadian physical education, and the data Walton presented backed up those conclusions. "Some of her students feared her, many loved her, but all respected her. . . . Ethel Mary Cartwright's efforts led directly to the present physical education degree programs at McGill and the University of Saskatchewan" (1976:184).

Information for the study was gathered through interviews and correspondence with Miss Cartwright's immediate family and her friends, colleagues, and former students. Other important sources included materials from libraries, archives, historical records of various



associations, and published and unpublished writings in the history of physical education. Walton used a chronological format for her study, incorporating a topical arrangement within time periods when Miss Cartwright was engaged in several areas of activity simultaneously. The chapter headings included: Early Years and Professional Preparation; Introduction to Canada; Halifax Ladies College: 1904-1906; The McGill Years: 1906-1927; The Saskatchewan Years: 1929-1943; Professional Associations; and Retirement and Death. The author concluded that Ethel Mary Cartwright made four major contributions to physical education in Canada, and that altogether, the scope of her contribution to the broad field of physical education placed Miss Cartwright in the company of Crocker, Lamb, Naismith, and McKenzie as an outstanding figure in the annals of the profession in Canada. This study was a well-rounded account of the life of an early professional in physical education in Canada.

Keyes (Note 1) chose to reveal John Howard Crocker through the work he did, the ideas he put forth, and through those people he inspired to succeed as individuals in their own right. The author decided to "let the facts stand for themselves, comment would be superfluous" (1964:2). She omitted personal evaluation or criticism. A valuable history of several organizations was presented (YMCA, AAU, RLSS), for Crocker was a pioneer in these organizations and he helped to formulate their policies.

The information was arranged chronologically as much as possible. For the sake of simplicity, continuity, and completeness, each organization was dealt with separately. Chapter headings included: Youth; The Young Men's Christian Association; The Royal Life Saving Society; The





Amateur Athletic Union; The University of Western Ontario; and Retirement. The sources used included books, articles and periodicals, reports, unpublished material, letters, correspondence with the author, and personal interviews.

Keyes employed a two-part methodology. First, she examined all available written sources of information. After a thorough investigation of the known written material, personal interviews were conducted with people associated with the identified organizations who knew Dr. Crocker. Keyes' thorough research should have given her the background on which to base some conclusions, but she chose not to do this in the study.

In his dissertation, Eaton (Note 8) stated that: "Dr. Lamb played a leading role in the development of a Canadian philosophy and programme of physical education. It is realized that Dr. Lamb was not the only influence in Canadian physical education but his impact was great indeed" (1964:Foreword). He presented a very good case to support this statement. Lamb's influence in Canada was largely determined by two roles he played, one as Director of Physical Education at McGill from 1919 to 1949, and the other as a force in determining policy and procedures of many national sport governing bodies. Dr. Lamb had problems and shortcomings in his career, and Eaton offered a frank discussion of these without apology or embarrassment. Lamb's contributions to the literature of physical education were very limited, and Eaton examined several reasons why this was so. The biggest professional problem Dr. Lamb faced was the question of the philosophy of an intercollegiate athletic programme, and more particularly the problems in McGill athletics. He was often criticized for his belief that professional practices should





not be allowed to invade amateur athletics, but Dr. Lamb held firmly to this principle throughout his life.

Sources for Eaton's study included books, periodicals, encyclopedia articles, unpublished materials, annual reports and minutes, speeches, newspapers, files from the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER), and Amateur Athletic Union of Canada (AAU of C), and personal interviews with relatives, colleagues, and friends. He divided the study topically into spheres of activity, and the chapter headings included: Australia 1886-1907; Vancouver 1907-1909; Springfield 1909-1912; McGill University and War Service 1912-1919; The Organization of the McGill Department of Physical Education; McGill Athletics; The Required Physical Education Program and the Health Service; McGill School of Physical Education; Canadian Leadership; Professional and Other Associations; Personality of A. S. Lamb; and The Philosophy of A. S. Lamb. After a well laid out examination of the available data, Eaton concluded that "throughout his life Dr. Lamb was a crusader. He did not achieve all the goals that he had set for himself, but his influence on Canadian physical education was greater than that of any other person" (1964:188). A qualifying phrase 'of his era' might have been added. J. Douglas Eaton presented a well-researched, well-written account of one of the greatest pioneers in Canadian physical education.

Adelaide Hunter's (Note 10) biography of R. Tait McKenzie had a two-fold purpose: to present an account of the versatile life of R. Tait McKenzie with special emphasis on his contributions to, and his leadership in, the development of physical education; and to indicate the forces that influenced both his life and his work. But the account



of McKenzie's life that was presented was very eulogistic in nature, and it made the reader feel something was missing. As André Maurois said (1962:167-168):

I do not think a great man could be belittled in the eyes of intelligent admirers, by the acknowledgement of a certain number of human weaknesses. On the contrary, it seems to me that his courage and devotion are all the more to be admired if he had other inclinations to fight in his own soul.

The author used letters and interviews as her main sources. Although she chose to emphasize the physical education aspect of McKenzie's life, his contributions to medicine and art can also be related to physical education. This author did not include enough analysis of the data to be able to produce a down-to-earth, realistic account of McKenzie's career. "A biographer must weigh the evidence and decide" (Clifford, 1959:309).

The purpose of Dewar's (Note 11) history of the professional contributions of James Naismith was to present the facts of his life so that he may be remembered for his dedication to the service of mankind as well as the inventor of a game. The author chose to give Naismith, the person, the primary emphasis in the study. The majority of the story was told by newspaper clippings, and Naismith's professional contributions were interspersed with detailed accounts of his personal life. In contrast, John Garraty (1957:166) stated that "essentially the biographer must decide whether to emphasize career or character, never forgetting that in every instance both are necessary if the true task of biography is to be accomplished." The study appeared to lack any form of criticism or unfavourable opinion, and did not give the impression of being a completely candid portrait of an individual.

Major sources for the study included personal letters and papers,



articles, newspapers and public records, recollections of family and friends, books and periodicals, and unpublished materials. The framework for the study consisted of four chapters: A Canadian Christian; Before and After the Game; Among the Jayhawks; and Conclusion and Evaluation. Within each chapter a chronological format was followed.

The purpose of a review of literature is to analyze previous work done in a specific area of interest, and to become familiar with methodologies used and approaches taken with different subjects. It can also point out differences, discrepancies, and 'gaps' in research. The works presented here have been valuable as guides for the present study.

The Symons Report, To Know Ourselves, stated that "this country has a rich and distinctive heritage in sports and physical culture. But Canadians seem smitten with cultural amnesia when it comes to this important aspect of our history and national life" (1975:220). One important way to understand the events of the past is to study the lives of individuals who were a part of that past. The Symons report concluded (1975:221):

More extensive research and teaching about physical culture and sport should help Canadians to become more aware of the role of sport and of physical fitness in their lives, and of the contributions made by Canadians in this area. It should also stimulate more interest among Canadians in physical education as a profession {sic} with a vital contribution to make to the health and culture of this country.

Several brief biographical sketches of Dr. Maury Van Vliet have been written, but these have primarily been concerned with highlighting his career, and often have accompanied an award or presentation. He has received five honorary degrees, and a synopsis of his career has accompanied the awarding of each of those degrees. Van Vliet was the





subject of a brief introductory article written by Gerald Redmond (1978:3-4) for the special Commonwealth Games issue of the Journal of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation; his contributions had been previously noted in another issue of this journal, when he was presented with a CAHPER Honor Award (1963: 24, 38). A profile of "Dr. Van Vliet the Educator" (Miller, L., 1978: 23) appeared in Sportscene magazine, and several newspaper articles have documented the outstanding features of his career. But no full-length study has been done on Maury Van Vliet. The highlights of his career are well-known, but an in-depth analysis of Dr. Van Vliet's professional contributions has not been forthcoming. The abbreviated studies mentioned above point to the necessity of a more detailed work concerning a man who has been active in the profession in Canada for more than 40 years. With these thoughts in mind, a history of the professional contributions of Maurice Lewis Van Vliet from 1945 to 1978 is presented.





## Chapter 2

### BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

It was perhaps only a coincidence that Maurice Lewis Van Vliet was born so close to the border of the country where he was to spend his entire adult professional life. He was born in Bellingham, Washington on August 3, 1913, the third of four children.<sup>1</sup> Late in 1914, the Van Vliet family moved to Seattle, and when Maury Van Vliet was six, the family made its final move, this time to Monrovia, California. It was there, in the virtually utopian sporting environment of southern California, that Van Vliet was to spend his formative years.

In elementary and high school, Van Vliet spent a great deal of his time involved in athletics; a lesser amount of time was devoted to academic pursuits. A family scrapbook, kept by his mother from 1926 to 1936, showed that Van Vliet was a fine all-round athlete, lettering in "all four sports" in high school - football, baseball, basketball, and track and field - as well as being named to the National Scholar-Athlete Council. Even in those early days, Van Vliet showed leadership qualities in athletics which would characterize his later professional life - he was the quarterback in football and the playmaking guard/forward in basketball. He showed himself to be a man who liked to be in charge of the situation.

After graduating from high school in 1931, Van Vliet spent the next two years at Citrus Junior College in Azusa, California. His

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Van Vliet provided biographical information during personal interview held December 6, 1979.



athletic success continued. Again he lettered in all four sports, and was an All-Conference selection in baseball and football, as well as the unanimous choice for All-Conference quarterback.

Upon graduating from Citrus, Van Vliet enrolled somewhat reluctantly at the University of Oregon in September, 1933. At this point, he was unsure of what he wanted to do with his life - physical education was a natural alternative, but Van Vliet's older brother was a pharmacist in Los Angeles, and taking pharmacy at USC was also a possibility. But after an impressive walk-on performance in an early season Oregon football game, in which he came into the game and on his third play from scrimmage cut back 66 yards for a touchdown, Van Vliet was convinced to stay in Eugene and enroll in physical education, aided by an athletic scholarship. He wanted to continue participating in his four high school and junior college sports, but in the end Van Vliet concentrated on football in the fall and baseball in the spring. In the two winter terms when he was not involved in intercollegiate sport, Van Vliet took as many courses as he was permitted to take, and then went to the Dean's office to argue for one or two more. This arrangement of his academic schedule allowed Van Vliet to take a lighter course load during the football and baseball seasons. "Carrot Top" Van Vliet gained many athletic honours while attending the University of Oregon, including All-Coast selection in football (as well as All-American mention), and All-Conference selection in baseball. His teammate, Joe Gordon, later played professional baseball, and the New York Yankee scouts also talked to Maury Van Vliet, but he refused their offer of a tryout in the big leagues.

Despite his success, the heavy athletic schedule had taken its



toll academically, and Van Vliet had to return to the University of Oregon to complete his B.Sc. during the fall term of 1935. Because of the Depression, his job prospects were not particularly promising, but Van Vliet expected to be teaching physical education in a high school in a small town in Oregon. Just then, however, an interesting job offer from Vancouver came across the Dean's desk at Oregon. The University of British Columbia was interested in hiring a Director of Men's Athletics and a Director of Women's Athletics, so Van Vliet went to Vancouver for an interview. To his great surprise he was hired, and the job consisted of a four-month temporary appointment starting in January 1936. Gertrude Moore, a graduate of the Margaret Eaton School in Toronto, was appointed to head the women's programme. Van Vliet still considers this job to be the luckiest thing that ever happened to him. He completed his four-month appointment and was invited to return in the fall to begin an eight-month temporary appointment. When Van Vliet returned to Vancouver in September 1936, he brought his bride, Virginia (nee Gaddis), with him.

Life for the Van Vliets on the UBC campus was hectic to say the least. In addition to establishing and running the Men's Intramural programme, as well as teaching optional physical education classes, Van Vliet coached several varsity sports, some of which (rugby, for example) he had never participated in himself. But he was young, energetic, hardworking, and ambitious, and he accepted all challenges. His inter-collegiate basketball teams won two national championships, in 1937 and 1941, and Van Vliet also had success as a football coach. He was quite literally a 'one man band' for the total men's athletic programme at UBC during the school term. His summers were spent continuing his graduate





studies at Eugene, and in 1940 he was awarded an M.Sc. in physical education by the University of Oregon.

Although successful, there was a factor at UBC that was limiting Van Vliet's forward progress, both personally and professionally. Physical education had no official academic status at the university, and consequently Van Vliet did not have an academic appointment, although his contract had been permanent since 1937. He had been hired primarily as a coach. Van Vliet had grown up in an environment where physical education was an integral part of the daily school routine from grades 1 to 12, and he found the casual approach to physical education at UBC frustrating, although it was typical of most Canadian institutions at that time. He wanted his field to be accepted as a profession, and he was a man in a hurry. A fortuitous event occurred which allowed him to fulfill his ambitions. A small advertisement appeared in the February 1945 edition of the C.P.E.A. Bulletin, stating that The University of Alberta in Edmonton was looking for a Director of Physical Education. The salary offered was \$4,100 a year, but more importantly, the position included professorial status. Now that the war was over, attitudes towards physical education were slowly starting to change in Canadian universities, and Van Vliet saw this job as an opportunity with potential. He applied for the job and was hired. Physical education at The University of Alberta was in a fairly primitive state, but Maury Van Vliet, ever eager to accept a challenge, headed for Edmonton in September 1945, accompanied by his wife and four children.

On May 21, 1945, K. McConnell of the Vancouver Daily Province printed an article on the departure of Van Vliet:

Weighing 147, five foot nine inches in height, Maurie {sic}





Van Vliet is going to be missed from British Columbia athletics. He enjoyed the reputation of getting things done and, at the same time, providing encouragement for students to accomplish their most important tasks. He is primarily interested in the professional side of physical education.

Maurie {sic} has dreamed of every school in Canada having competent, capable physical education directors. Thus his department in Alberta will be devoted to this work, striving to find its proper place in Canada's educational system (p.10).

It was an important move for Van Vliet, as well as an important acquisition for The University of Alberta.

The University of Alberta Gateway (September 27, 1945:2) described Van Vliet's arrival this way: "Under his guidance, physical education will be placed on an entirely new level at the University and, while the reorganization of the department may require one or even two years, Alberta may well become a lead {sic} in physical education in the Dominion." The Gateway made an interesting prediction; the next three decades of Maury Van Vliet's professional life were centred at The University of Alberta. There was a great deal of work to be done, and Van Vliet wasted no time getting to it.



### Chapter 3

#### DEPARTMENT TO SCHOOL TO FACULTY: PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The annual Report of the Board of Governors and the President of The University of Alberta (Note 12), presented in 1944, contained an interesting entry:

The Committee on Physical Education is strongly of the opinion that, as a result of the experience in recruiting in connection with the Armed Services, and in view of the probable post-war schemes of Public Health and Public Welfare, the problem of physical education is due to assume much greater importance in the whole scheme of Education than it has enjoyed in the past. In this field, as in every other field of educational effort, the University should be prepared to provide the necessary leadership. The Committee, accordingly, recommends that, as soon as the end of the war appears to be in sight, steps be taken to secure a thoroughly competent Director of Physical Education who will organize that Department on the same permanent and efficient basis as that of all other Departments of the University (p.45).

The university administration was taking a step in the direction of reorganizing physical education. The outbreak of the Second World War had allowed the physical training and calisthenics concept of physical education to play a dominant role. The Youth Training Programme had been established in 1937, partly in response to the successful Pro-Rec Movement in British Columbia. Several Commonwealth countries, including Britain, New Zealand, and Australia, had passed national fitness acts, and in 1943, the Canadian government introduced the National Fitness Act, to promote the physical fitness of Canadians through physical education, recreation, and sport (Redmond, 1979:52). But with the end



of the war in sight, the administration of The University of Alberta wanted to change the emphasis from "PT" to "PE." Intercollegiate competition was ready to be reestablished, as noted in the Report of the Provost (Report of the Board of Governors and the President of The University of Alberta, 1944-45, Note 13): "Plans are being made for a limited number of WCIAU competitions for next session. The prospect of a highly qualified Director of Physical Education who will assume responsibility for the direction of Athletics has added much enthusiasm to the plans for the future" (p.43).

When Maury Van Vliet was interviewed for the position of Director of Physical Education at The University of Alberta, he made it very clear that he wanted to teach and develop the academic programme, that he did not want to be extensively involved in coaching, and that he wanted a definite professorial rank (Van Vliet, M., Note 14). The University offered him a Full Professorship, indicating that they were prepared to give Van Vliet the kind of support he wanted. While many people on the campus did not wholeheartedly support physical education as a university subject, they at least were willing to allow Van Vliet to try to develop his programme. The acceptance of physical education as an appropriate academic subject was slow in coming, but almost immediately, Van Vliet and the administration began talking about the right kind of facilities, the right kind of equipment, the right kind of atmosphere, and the need to develop academic courses in the field (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

Murray Smith, currently a Professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta, enrolled as a freshman in Edmonton in 1945. He recalled that the acceptance of physical education as a suitable subject for university study required "long





time persuasion, and Maury Van Vliet provided it. There was a certain core of people who approved of legitimizing physical education at the University, but Van Vliet had to convince the rest. He slowly but surely won a terrific amount of support" (Smith, M., Note 15).

Van Vliet had the opportunity to pick his own staff, and he looked for the kind of personnel who would complement himself as well as each other. This approach would be a key factor in the ongoing development of physical education from a Department to a School to a Faculty. But in the beginning at Alberta, there were no grandiose plans. There were inadequacies in all directions, such as lack of facilities and programmes, and a scarcity of trained instructors, and "all these things had to be conquered as quickly as possible" (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

Although the Department of Physical Education did offer some courses in physical education in the Faculty of Education, it was an autonomous department that was never under the direct control of any faculty. The University of Alberta had recently been given the responsibility for the preparation of all teachers in Alberta, and its Faculty of Education was the first in Canada to be given such a mandate (Coutts, H.T., Note 16). The Department of Physical Education concerned itself primarily with intercollegiate athletics and the service programme, which consisted of compulsory physical education for first and second year students. The service programme occupied the majority of the time of staff members, and the Department of Physical Education was serving all faculties, schools, and departments on the campus.

The first staff member Van Vliet hired was a woman from California, Tessa Johnson (Allen). Like Van Vliet, she was young, competent, progressive, and energetic. By 1947, Richard Hughes, Don Smith, and Pat



Austin had joined the staff as well. Van Vliet continued to look for "competent, keen and eager Canadians for permanent staff" (Van Vliet, M., Note 14), and in 1948, Herb McLachlin of Edmonton was hired to coordinate the intramural programme (see Plate 1). Lou Goodwin was on staff at The University of Alberta Calgary Campus at this time as well, having been hired in the Faculty of Education. Van Vliet wanted people on his staff who had definite areas of specialization and who came from differing backgrounds. "We had a nucleus of a small staff that was representative of the best ideas and philosophies across North America" (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

In 1946-47, the Men's and Women's Athletic Associations combined to form the University Athletic Board. The Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1946-47 (Note 17) indicated:

Under the new organization {sic}, the Head of the Department of Physical Education is Chairman of the Board and Executive Officer. The President of Men's Athletics is Vice-Chairman, the President of Women's Athletics is Secretary; a student member is elected Treasurer and a faculty representative is appointed by the President. The Board is responsible for its own finances, but reports to the Treasurer of the Students' Union. This organization has been tried out and found to be very successful. Much of the credit for this organization is due to Professor Van Vliet of the Department of Physical Education (p.46).

Further reorganization of the Department was in evidence in 1947-48 when the intramural programme was introduced to the campus. Tessa Johnson Allen (Note 18) remembered the early days of the Department this way:

Our small staff at The University of Alberta worked long hours teaching, coaching, organizing, and developing new and better Physical Education programmes. We were all young and eager and full of creative ideas. Our department head - M. L. Van Vliet - never stifled our enthusiasm; on the contrary, he inspired and channelled our efforts. As I remember, our staff and planning meetings in the Old Drill Hall were never dull. Ideas were challenged, and verbal battles ensued, but each time we would emerge united in purpose and ready to forge ahead.







Plate 1. 1950 Physical Education Staff. Front row (left to right): E. Fildes, P. Austin, I. McBean. Back row (left to right): W.D. Smith, A. Eriksson, H.J. McLachlin, M. Van Vliet (University of Alberta Archives).



Plate 2. Physical Education building under construction, 1959 (University of Alberta Archives).







The curriculum of the Department in its first five years under Van Vliet consisted almost entirely of activity courses. In 1950, the Department of Physical Education and the Faculty of Education agreed, with the approval of General Faculties Council, that a Bachelor of Education in Physical Education degree be offered. "While those who qualified for this degree were registered within the Faculty of Education, they were to all intents and purposes students of the Department of Physical Education" (Coutts, H.T., Note 16). As might be expected, the new degree was much more specialized and significantly more academic in orientation. The Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1949-1950 (Note 19) stated:

This four year course will provide professional preparation for students planning to teach health and physical education in the schools, act as supervisors of physical education in cities and school divisions and serve as directors of physical education or recreation for private and public organizations. . . . This course should not only provide leaders in this field for the Province of Alberta, but should improve the level of instruction and supervision in such a way that thousands of school children will be affected in matters of swimming, water safety and life-saving, co-ordination, poise and grace, recreational skills and growth and development generally (p.65).

Now the philosophy of the programme became important, along with the content of the degree. The Department of Physical Education wanted to have graduates up to a reasonable uniform standard as quickly as possible (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

During the first part of 1949, the RCAF Drill Hall, home of the Department of Physical Education, had to be moved to make way for the new Students' Union Building (now called University Hall). Van Vliet saw an opportunity for upgrading the gymnasium in the Drill Hall by having it moved; a new maple floor was installed, locker rooms and showers were renovated, and teaching stations were added. The deliberate



progress of physical education continued, and as the programme expanded, the two gymnasium facilities - the Drill Hall and Athabasca Hall - became more and more crowded. Van Vliet realized the more growth and maturity his department displayed, the better off it would be. The Reports of the Governors of The University of Alberta throughout the 1950s continually pointed to the lack of facilities.

In 1954, the Department of Physical Education was elevated to the status of a school. The growth of the programme during Van Vliet's nine years on the campus had been considerable. During the 1954-55 session, 41 students were registered in the School of Physical Education, 694 students were registered in the service programme, 2,529 students participated in intramurals, and The University of Alberta was represented in 15 intercollegiate sports.

During the 1956-57 school year, The University of Alberta announced the approval of a new degree, Bachelor of Physical Education. This change from Bachelor of Education in Physical Education to Bachelor of Physical Education was extremely important in the fields of recreation and physical education, since it provided a three-year course for those wishing to go directly into recreation and allowed for more adequate concentration on teacher education through a fourth year for those planning to teach (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1956-57, p.88, Note 20).

There were also indications of the growing acceptance of physical education on The University of Alberta campus, and indeed, across Canada, as recorded in the Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1957-58 (Note 21):

The increased demands for graduates in physical education, the recreational needs of the students and the serious problem of



physical fitness and worthy use of leisure time in Canadian society demand increased efforts on the part of all Canadian universities in the fields of recreation and physical education. The University of Alberta's immediate plans for staff, program and facilities should provide the opportunity for Alberta to lead the nation in these two fields (p.89).

By 1958, several factors had combined to allow the start of construction on the new physical education building. A substantial donation had been made in the memory of Winslow and Christian Hamilton who had been killed in a plane crash. The old ice arena was close to being a condemned building, and the gymnasium facilities on the campus were completely inadequate for the programme being run. Money was available from the university as well as the provincial government, and the building was begun (see Plate 2). It had been a long, slow struggle to gain approval for the new building, but Maury Van Vliet and his staff had made a tremendous commitment to their programme, and on May 17, 1960, the new physical education building was officially opened. The staff of the School of Physical Education had worked closely with the designers of the facility, and the building was termed "perhaps the most modern and complete in all of Canada" (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1959-60, p.147, Note 22).

Dr. Max Howell visited Edmonton in 1959 and saw the old Drill Hall and the cramped spaces and wondered how anyone could survive in the isolation and the poor working conditions. "But the professional climate was right and I felt refreshed talking to them. They indeed knew where it was at, and not too long thereafter a new gymnasium complex arose, the finest in the country" (Howell, M. L., Note 23).

As a professional, Maury Van Vliet was never satisfied with what he had; there was always something more that could be accomplished.







The next logical step appeared to be the introduction of graduate work within the School of Physical Education. Several staff members were involved in research, and the new building would be able to more readily accommodate the research interests of both staff and students. In September 1960, the first students registered in the new Master of Science degree programme in Physical Education. Graduate instruction was offered in the history, philosophy, and supervision of physical education, and the administration of recreation (University of Alberta Calendar 1960-61, 53rd Session, p.424, Note 24). Another large step in the maturing process had been taken.

Once the School of Physical Education was operating full-time in its new building, the scope and the quality of the programme were greatly enhanced. Director Van Vliet noted in his Annual Report (Report of the Governors of the University of Alberta 1960-61, Note 25):

After one full year in the new Physical Education building the personnel of the School of Physical Education have a very real sense of pride and accomplishment which has directly resulted in excellent morale and greater efficiency. The scope of the entire program has been immeasurably increased through both the organized and the unorganized activities and, of course, the level of instruction has reached a new high for all classes with the ideal facilities and superior teaching aides (p.186).

Although Van Vliet was not a research scholar himself, he saw the need for research, and in 1961 he hired Max Howell to develop and direct the graduate programme. As Howell remembers (Note 26): "He was very good at recognizing people's abilities, and he let them do their own thing. He recognized my abilities, and they were useful to him in his situation." Howell and Van Vliet worked together on several occasions to present briefs. In many ways, they were similar types of men - both ambitious and industrious, not afraid to make 'tough' decisions, wanting



nothing but the best. Van Vliet trusted Howell's judgment and gave him a great deal of freedom in developing the graduate programme. The University of British Columbia, the University of Western Ontario, and The University of Alberta offered graduate programmes at the Master's level at that time, but there was no Ph.D. programme offered as yet in Canada or the Commonwealth.

In 1961, the Provincial Secretary for Alberta, The Honourable Russell Patrick, requested the formation of a committee to investigate the possibility of a degree programme in recreation being offered at The University of Alberta. Dr. Elsie McFarland, a representative of the provincial Department of Health and Recreation, and Dr. Van Vliet were among those named to the committee. Now that the graduate programme in physical education had been left in capable hands, Van Vliet turned his attention to recreation. The committee, chaired by Professor Gordon Peacocke of the Department of Drama at The University of Alberta, supported the idea of a degree programme in recreation that would be connected with the School of Physical Education.

In April, 1962, the President {of The University of Alberta, Walter Johns} announced the establishment of a new four-year degree course leading to a B.A. in Recreation Leadership to be introduced in September, 1962. This very important step forward in the recognition of leisure-time problems will provide opportunities for improvement in the quality and qualifications of those people engaged in recreation work (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1961-62, p.74, Note 27).

Three years later, the name of the B.A. degree was changed to Recreation Administration. Although recreation was not his main interest, Van Vliet saw the need for it to be included in the university curriculum along with physical education. But the recreation degree had a much less defined programme than the physical education degree, and its



orientation was more of a social sciences nature. The degree had a similar 'arts' content to many other B.A. degrees, and the department was given a great deal of latitude in defining what kind of background its graduates would need (Van Vliet, M., Note 28).

The research aspect of the School of Physical Education continued to develop through staff publications, funding for research, and an increasing number of graduate students in various areas of specialization, and soon Van Vliet felt the school had the staff with the capabilities, the facilities, and the research techniques available to offer the Ph.D. programme (Van Vliet, M., Note 14). But a major landmark in the history of physical education in Canada occurred first, in 1964, when The University of Alberta established the first Faculty of Physical Education in the country. Twenty-four years after the first degree programme in physical education had been established at the University of Toronto, the University of Alberta announced the creation of the first Faculty of Physical Education in Canada (Cosentino and Howell, 1971:42-43). The annual Report of the President of the University of Alberta for 1963-64 (Note 29) indicated the importance of the achievement: "The School of Physical Education, which we believe is outstanding in Canada, has been raised to the status of a faculty - the first to achieve this status in the Commonwealth" (p.10). This new status caused Maury Van Vliet to be the first Dean of Physical Education in Canada and the Commonwealth. The areas of involvement in the new faculty included the B.P.E. programme, graduate studies, Women's programme (service programme and intramural sports), Men's programme (service programme and intramural sports), Bachelor of Arts in Recreation programme, intercollegiate athletics, and teacher education. Dr. Herbert Coutts, Dean of Education







at The University of Alberta from 1955 to 1972, recalled that "Dr. Van Vliet and his colleagues insisted on a high-standards approach through degrees with a strong foundation in the Arts and Sciences as well as the studies specific to physical, health and recreation requirements" (Coutts, H., Note 16). The tremendous growth of the School of Physical Education had led to the granting of faculty status. The school was involved in several diverse programmes, including undergraduate preparation, graduate work, research, intramurals, intercollegiate athletics, and the service programme. These increasing professional responsibilities all pointed to the need for faculty status, and it was granted on April 1, 1964. As always, a fair amount of convincing had to be done, but the time seemed right. As Herbert Coutts (Note 16) stated:

I am convinced that there is a "tide in the affairs" of universities when certain advancements can be made and that Dr. Van Vliet was perceptive enough to catch these 'at the flood'. I am convinced too, that his vision and his leadership were strong factors in the development and growth of the Faculty of Physical Education.

At the same time, more and more attention was being paid to the field of recreation within Alberta, including attention at The University of Alberta. In December 1965, an Advisory Committee on the Recreation Degree Program was established. The committee consisted of 12 professionals in the field who were invited to provide input into the programme. This outside professional involvement was important, especially in an emerging profession like recreation. Many of the committee's recommendations were implemented during its two-year existence. Within the faculty, a curriculum committee was studying the entire B.P.E. programme in order to recommend long-term changes. The scope of professional preparation was widening. The three-year B.P.E. programme in existence at that time was based entirely on teacher preparation. Other univers-



ities across Canada began to introduce four-year programmes, and physical education had developed to the point where a four-year programme of professional preparation could be justified. In September 1967, the B.P.E. degree at The University of Alberta became a four-year programme.

The University of Alberta had also introduced a Ph.D. programme in physical education in the fall of 1967. It was the first degree of its kind in the Commonwealth. This important development in graduate work provided Canadians with an alternative to going abroad to study. A brief history of the evolution of the degree was provided in an article written by Maury Van Vliet and Max Howell (1967a:31-32):

The program was initially debated in the Graduate Committee within the Faculty of Physical Education (M. L. Howell (Chairman), M. L. Van Vliet, R. B. J. Macnab, W. D. Smith, H. J. McLachlin, P. L. Austin, S. Mendryk) and preliminary briefs were prepared. These were approved, after considerable debate, by the Faculty at large and the Council of the Faculty. A notice of motion was served at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, which is the body controlling graduate work at The University of Alberta, comprising one representative from each discipline giving graduate work in the University.

An ad hoc committee was formed to examine the request, the research and laboratory facilities, the quality of the staff and their research, and the proposed course of study. . . . Following intensive investigation, they unanimously recommended that the Faculty of Physical Education be allowed to give the Ph.D. degree. This recommendation was debated by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, on January 20, 1967 and unanimously approved. The General Faculty Council voted unanimous approval on January 30, 1967.

The new degree allowed students to select a single area of specialization from physiology of exercise, history of physical education, or human motor performance. The growth of the faculty had been noteworthy - 11 years after the B.P.E. degree was first offered at The University of Alberta, the first Ph.D. students enrolled in physical education. The dean of the faculty was then in an influential position with the establishment of the first Ph.D. programme in physical education in Canada. As Ed Zemrau, Athletic Director at The University of Alberta (Note 30)



recently observed: "Universities in Canada are filled with University of Alberta graduates, and that would not have happened if we had not had the early Master's degree and later the Ph.D. degree. In many cases, The University of Alberta graduates are the leaders."

In May 1968, Dean Van Vliet announced that three departments within the Faculty of Physical Education had been established: Recreation Administration, Physical Education, and Educational Services. The Division of Athletics remained under the guidance of the faculty until 1974 when it became a fourth faculty department, the Department of Athletic Services. The Department of Educational Services was renamed Movement Education in 1976.

There was also talk at that time of a proposed new building which would include research facilities, staff offices, and activity areas. Dr. Van Vliet's skill of getting what he asked for was displayed again when the second physical education building officially opened in 1970. The undergraduate physical education curriculum took on a whole new look in 1973 with the introduction of "routes" into the programme; for the first time, a student was able to specialize at the undergraduate level in adapted physical education, administration, athletic training and conditioning, coaching, dance, or outdoor education. In 1975, the name of the faculty was changed to Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation.

Determining the acknowledged leader's actual role in the development of any organization is difficult. Within the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta, a great deal was accomplished by many people, but they were people of Van Vliet's selection who worked under his guidance and direction. "Ultimately though,







the driving force, the impetus, comes from the person in the leadership role. He, in fact, to a large extent, influences change, whether it be positively or negatively" (Mitchelson, E.B., Note 31). Howard Wenger (Note 32), a Ph.D. graduate and subsequent staff member at The University of Alberta, recalled that Dean Van Vliet did not administer for lack of strife:

He liked problems to be caused that required solutions which would improve the situation. A great thing is to make your course so popular that you have to offer more sections, but you don't have the facilities so you have to build more facilities. To some people, that's a problem. To Dr. Van Vliet, that was a problem that helped us - it got us a new facility.

Dorothy Harris (Note 33), a staff member in physical education since 1963, remembered an incident which typified Van Vliet's administrative and leadership style:

After we had spent two years planning a new three year program, Dr. Van Vliet walked in and said, "We are going to forget the three year program and plan a four-year program instead," and that was that. It seemed appropriate at that time, and we would probably have not moved to a four-year program, but he did it in 15 minutes. There was always a fair amount of 'stewing around' about Dr. Van Vliet's procedures, but in the end, everyone basically appreciated the fact that he was usually right, always ahead of the game, and ready to save a lot of time by moving on it.

"Authoritarian" was an adjective many people used to describe Van Vliet's leadership style. Steve Mendryk, a member of Van Vliet's staff for 25 years, described him as a "very domineering and persuasive kind of person" (Note 34). In the early days of the department, an autocratic style of leadership was probably the most effective; someone had to decide the direction the department would go, and Van Vliet, with input from his staff, was that person. Max Wyman (Note 35), a former President of The University of Alberta, suggested that "Dr. Van Vliet was perfect in the years after 1945 when physical education had to be



developed from a minimal base. The University needed people to get things done quickly and well." Although there was a definite 'team' approach in evidence in the department, there is no doubt that, from 1945 to 1975, Maury Van Vliet was the leader. Van Vliet hired staff members to do specific jobs, and he slowly moved away from coaching and teaching into full-time administration. The larger the Department, School, and Faculty became, the more time Van Vliet spent dealing with administrative matters.

Van Vliet was open to the suggestions of his staff members, and his tremendous information and knowledge base was a key factor in understanding why his staff, in most cases, accepted his decisions. "He would listen to people's opinions, he would solicit them on occasion, perhaps not as often as some people would have liked" (Redmond, G., Note 36). But Van Vliet felt he was being paid to make decisions, and it was his job to do so. Van Vliet knew what he wanted, and the more progress the department made, the more confidence the staff had in his decisions. He very rarely made an important decision in a hurry - first he talked with people and collected all the available information. Gerry Glassford, a former student and current staff member at The University of Alberta (Note 37), recalled that:

Van Vliet was a dictatorial person in some ways, but in other ways I don't think he was as dictatorial as many people think. His image of a dictator was generated by those people who insisted on initial response. He was never a man to commit himself outright initially - he always wanted to think it through, and if it was reasonable then he would give you the go ahead. I never found him to be a dictator when I was Chairman of the Department of Physical Education. He never came down and told me what to do. He gave me the right to run the Department. But if I did something wrong and got the Faculty in hot water, then I heard about it.

A highly competitive man, it seemed that Van Vliet would rarely



put himself in a situation where he might lose. He would size up an issue and attempt to defuse objections by modification or explanation, thereby producing a positive climate for decisions to be made. Very often, the decisions that were made agreed with what Van Vliet wanted to be done. But, as Murray Smith (Note 15) stated:

It is a gross oversimplification to say he simply bullied people into his point of view. He was far too intelligent for that - if you are going to be here year after year you had better develop some confidence in people and stand behind your products, and be willing to admit there are some things you would like to do but cannot do. There was far more sensitivity in him than some people saw because they looked at him far too superficially.

Van Vliet saw it was to his advantage to know what other people were thinking. He would have liked to have had the new dance degree programme in place in the faculty before he left, but, as Dorothy Harris (Note 33) remembered, that was one battle he was not quite sure he could win at the upper echelons, so he did not push it.

Van Vliet hated to lose in anything. He did not like to be 'Number 2', and as Max Howell (Note 23) stated:

He had his mean aspects when he was faced with something he might lose. This may have been an arguably sound personality trait, but in administrative circles it achieved much. If he didn't get what he wanted, he got what we shall say, troublesome, and people were reluctant to turn him down because they knew that they were in for a battle, and a protracted one at that.

Once Van Vliet had examined the available information and made up his mind on an issue, it was very difficult to change it. He was extremely persistent when he wanted something, and he would keep after it until he got it. "If he thought something was important enough, he would never bend" (Moser, C., Note 38). As Max Howell (Note 26) has said: "He knew how to wait and he knew how to argue."

However, Van Vliet could not be described as a patient man.







His approach was always very pragmatic - he liked to be doing things. Professor Ruby Anderson (Note 39), a staff member at The University of Alberta for 25 years, related that committees frustrated Van Vliet somewhat if they were designed to unearth all the ramifications and 'never' reach a decision. In chairing meetings, Van Vliet would push for decisions by encouraging people to make and second motions. "He did listen to advice and was acutely aware of what would work at the time. He seemed to have an uncanny awareness of what was needed now" (Anderson, R., Note 39).

Van Vliet continually showed himself to be more goal-oriented than process-oriented. To be involved with committees is a question of process, and Van Vliet was never completely happy with committee work. But, as Gerry Glassford related (Note 37): "He realized that times were changing, and that the committee structure was replacing the single individual who would make all responsible decisions, and he was prepared to bend to that a bit." As the faculty grew in size, Van Vliet's leadership style did change somewhat, but it is doubtful if he would have ever been totally comfortable in a situation where he had to listen to committees constantly. As another staff member, Harvey Scott (Note 40), saw the situation, "He was frustrated by not getting on with things - he was a builder. He wanted to pursue his dream."

Most staff members suggested that one of Van Vliet's greatest skills was in dealing with people on a one-to-one basis. He could be an extremely persuasive man, and the more he achieved, the more confidence his staff had in his ability and their own abilities. Some of his staff members feared him, but most respected what Van Vliet was doing for the profession. His commitment to his goals was unquestioned



and Van Vliet possessed several traits useful for leaders - discipline, ambition, confidence, mental and physical toughness, and courage. Persuasion was an important part of Van Vliet's leadership style, but "when he was in a situation where he had legitimate authority, and persuasion didn't work, he had the guts to step in and say, 'You may not like it, but this is the way it is going to be.' Not everyone can stand heat - he could" (Smith, M., Note 15).

Van Vliet could also be ruthless. Bob Wilberg, a physical education staff member, told the story of the time he was a witness to the ruthless side of Van Vliet (Note 41):

I was in his office bringing forward a plan for the new building - I was doing the leg work on it. He was pleased with what I had been doing and was very gratuitous with his remarks when the phone rang. The person on the other end of the phone was a victim of his ire. It was instantaneous turn-off from warm, kind Van Vliet to an evil genius destroying the person on the other end of the phone. As soon as the phone hit the cradle it was instant turn-on to the genial man who had been talking to me, with no residual emotion from the phone call at all.

Whatever the situation, you knew exactly where you stood with Van Vliet. He tackled life head-on at all times.

Although there were some personality conflicts between the Dean and his staff, the relatively low rate of turnover of academic personnel in physical education at The University of Alberta was evidence to support Van Vliet's claim that he sought to create a positive work environment where the staff could pursue their specialized areas of interest. Through his various achievements, Van Vliet was able to instill confidence in people about his ability to do the job, and that his direction was the way to go. "Because of that confidence, you went ahead and did your own job. We had a job to do and he had a job to do. He did his, and that allowed us to do ours" (Wenger, H., Note 32).



It was Van Vliet's vision and ideas that lay behind the majority of activities that came about at The University of Alberta. He surrounded himself with the kind of staff he felt could work with him to legitimize physical education as a university subject. Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta went through an evolutionary process which resulted in it being one of the highly-regarded faculties on the campus. There were problems, but very few setbacks; progress may have seemed slow at times, but it was continual. Van Vliet had the ability to look beyond his own field, and the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation had considerable impact on The University of Alberta campus, and beyond.





## Chapter 4

### GENERAL CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I was sometimes, I am sure, a difficult person to deal with by the university authorities because I was a little more obstinate and determined than they would have liked at times. But they were patient with me and allowed me, after I was knocked down, to keep coming back, and that is all you can ask for (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

The potential for the growth of physical education at The University of Alberta had brought Van Vliet to Edmonton; President Newton allowed him to go ahead and develop the programme for his department. As Van Vliet remembered (Note 14):

The move put me in a much more enviable position than almost anyone in Canada because I was prepared to carry my letter of resignation in my pocket if they didn't give me an opportunity to at least try to develop something worthwhile; if it had not been successful they would have said so and I could have gone elsewhere, either with or without their blessing.

Because Van Vliet's small department was serving all faculties, schools, and departments, the programme that developed in physical education and recreation influenced the entire campus. The three major university-wide programmes in the Department of Physical Education were the service programme, intramurals, and intercollegiate athletics. There was little doubt that Van Vliet wanted to help his profession develop into an integral component of university life, and the best way to do that, he felt, was to have a balanced programme, including intramurals, intercollegiate athletics, the service programme, and professional preparation. "Any university worth its salt will have an intra-



mural programme second to none, and can still win basketball games" (Van Vliet, M., Note 14).

From 1945 to 1950, all first and second year students at The University of Alberta were required to take two hours of physical education each week. Due to the growth in the size of the university and the increasing responsibilities of the Department of Physical Education, only first year students were required to enroll in the compulsory programme after 1950. By 1968, the ever-increasing number of students could not be accommodated, and the required service programme disappeared from the university curriculum. Van Vliet's view of compulsory physical education changed over the years. In his early years at Alberta, he saw it as a necessity. The activity enhanced many lives, and the majority of the time of the staff in Physical Education was spent instructing in the service programme. But slowly Van Vliet came to the conclusion that students should be able to choose freely the subjects they wanted to take, and in the late 1960s, universities were tending to move away from required programmes. In 1972, Van Vliet (1972:26) wrote:

I deeply regret not having the opportunity to expose students to what I think are some of the nicer things in life. . . . The combination of a slightly depressed budget and increased enrollment would have made it difficult for us to staff the compulsory courses.

A strong intramural programme could go a long way toward providing similar opportunities for students, and Van Vliet turned his attention in that direction.

Inter-faculty competition had long been a tradition at The University of Alberta, but until 1948 sport and recreation had not been organized on a campus-wide basis. In that year, Herb McLachlin was hired by the Department of Physical Education to coordinate the new



intramural programme. The Report of the Governors of the University of Alberta 1947-48 (Note 42) stated:

The Department of Physical Education was instrumental in introducing a program of intramural sports during the year. These are competitive sports for the benefit of the senior students who lack the necessary time or ability to participate in sport at Inter-collegiate or Inter-faculty levels (p.56).

From somewhat modest beginnings, the intramural programme at The University of Alberta expanded in size and met with a large degree of success across campus. In his 1949 report as the Chairman of the Committee on Physical Education, Dr. P. S. Warren (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1947-48, Note 42) stated:

Intra-mural sporting activities, which make up the greater part of the second year curriculum in the Department of Physical Education, have progressed very satisfactorily and most students are quite enthusiastic with this part of their work (p.59).

By 1950-51, the intramural programme had grown to the point where 1,722 students participated in 11 intramural sports; the number of participants rose to 2,529 by 1954-55. The intramural programme continued to expand during the next 20 years. Van Vliet believed that opportunity was the most crucial aspect of sport and physical education and recreation, and the programmes of his Department, School, and Faculty reflected this view. Another large area of opportunity was intercollegiate athletics.

Having been an outstanding athlete himself, Van Vliet could be expected to show a special interest in the intercollegiate programme, and although his own personal involvement was most pronounced in athletics in the early years, the overall balanced programme at The University of Alberta was of paramount importance. In 1945-46, intercollegiate competition in rugby, hockey, basketball, and various gymnasium activities was reintroduced at The University of Alberta, and "our University





took their {sic} fair share of honors" (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1945-46, p.51, Note 44). Van Vliet coached varsity football until 1948 (Plates 3 and 4) and basketball until 1954. By 1950, University of Alberta athletes participated in 12 intercollegiate sports, and the Department of Physical Education was becoming more involved in all facets of the programme, as the Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta for 1950-51 (Note 45) indicated:

The work of the UAB, in arranging intervarsity competition and otherwise managing or advising the handling of the moneys obtained from the students' athletic fees, is more and more falling on the shoulders of the Department of Physical Education (p.76).

In 1952-53, Van Vliet's university men's basketball team won the Western Intercollegiate title, the provincial title, the Western Canadian championship, and lost to the Toronto Tri-bells by four points in the fifth and deciding game for the Canadian Senior Championship. John Dewar, one of Van Vliet's players that year, and now Dean of the College of Physical Education at the University of Saskatchewan, remembered Van Vliet as an extremely competitive coach. "He showed the desire to win was uppermost and, within the rules, if there was a way of gaining an advantage, he usually took that advantage. He always looked for the edge" (Dewar, J., Note 46). Van Vliet's approach to his profession carried over into his coaching style. He always set high standards for himself as well as his team, and he worked his players very hard. "He had good rapport with his players, but occasionally there was a love/hate relationship" (McLachlin, H.J., Note 47). Van Vliet always prepared his own team very well, and his University of Alberta teams won four Conference championships.

Even when his own involvement in coaching ceased, Van Vliet





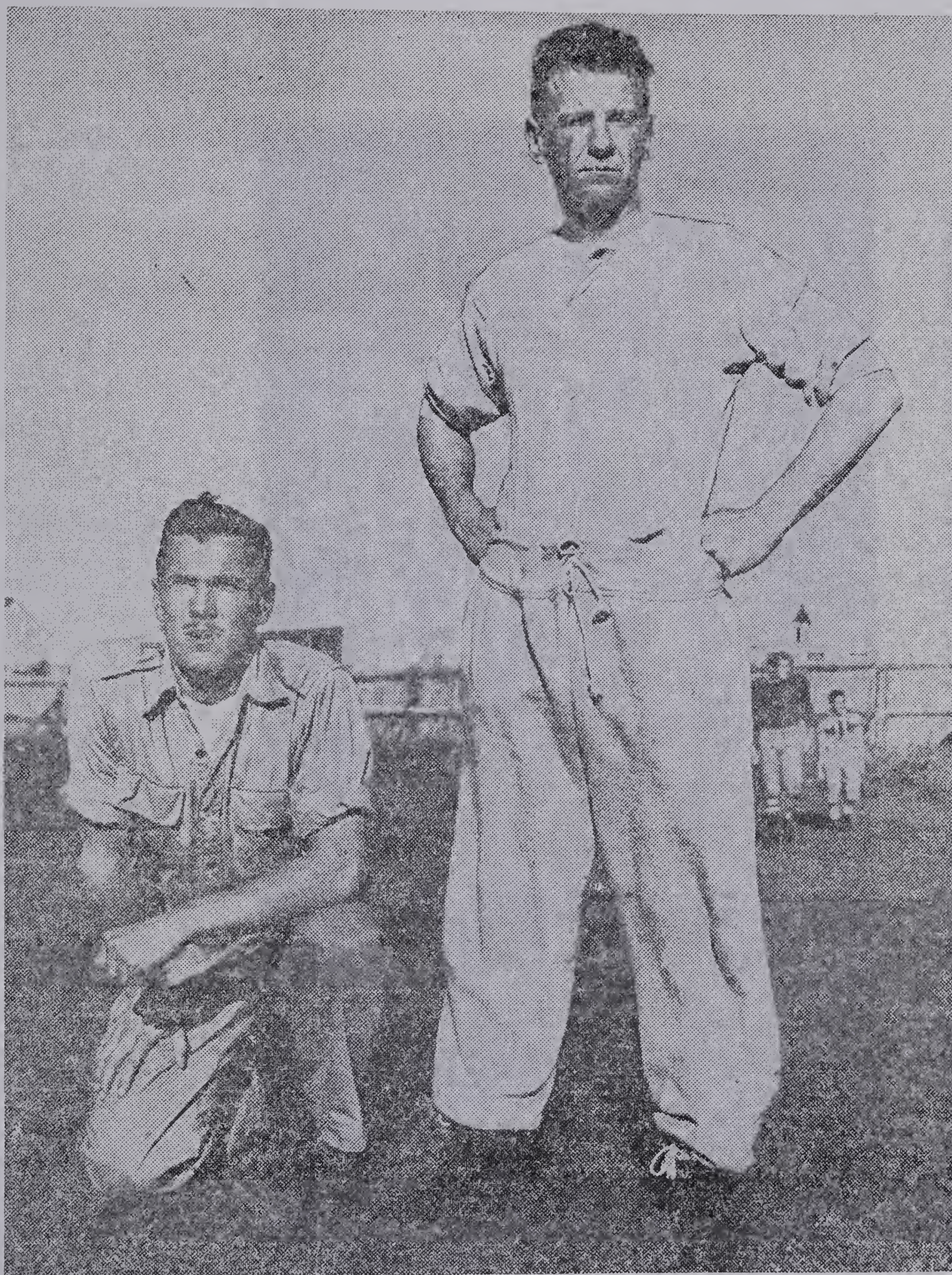


Plate 3. 1947 Golden Bears football coaches, Don Smith and Maury Van Vliet (Edmonton Bulletin, September 23, 1947).







Plate 4. 1947 Golden Bears football team (The University of Alberta Archives).





continued to be involved in athletics at an administrative level (Plate 5). The Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta for 1952-53 (Note 48) observed that:

The intercollegiate athletic program is gradually expanding. However, a really intelligent and productive program is dependent upon the ultimate cooperation of the four Western universities toward a fully operative Western Intercollegiate Conference. The significance of such a conference in its potential contribution to campus life should be placed before University administrators for discussion and analysis (p.70).

Agreement was finally reached among the four Western universities, and the Western Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union (WCIAU) came into existence. Maury Van Vliet was elected president in 1955-56. The University of Alberta had some very successful years in intercollegiate competition at that time, winning ten WCIAU championships in 1957-58 and eight in 1958-59. The opening of the new physical education building in 1960 allowed for an expansion and improvement in the services offered by the School of Physical Education. "The construction of the proposed physical education facilities on the campus will bring about a much improved inter-collegiate athletic program at Alberta in the future" (Report of the Governors of The University of Alberta 1957-58, p.99, Note 21). Dick Beddoes, now with the Toronto Globe and Mail and formerly a sports writer for the University of Alberta Gateway from 1946 to 1951, remembered the Van Vliet lesson as: "You can be better than you are. Show some guts" (Note 49).

As the programme at The University of Alberta continued to evolve and expand, Van Vliet had less direct contact with the students but he still maintained a keen interest in all phases of the programme. His dream was to move towards excellence in all areas, and if that was an impossible task, he at least made great progress towards that goal. The





Plate 5. 1951 Golden Bears hockey team with Bob Hope in Colorado Springs (Colorado Springs Free Press).





total programme at Alberta was designed to be an educational experience, and it was no coincidence that the eventual Department of Athletic Services, responsible for intramurals, intercollegiate athletics, and sports clubs, was always housed within the Faculty. "Van Vliet had a belief in keeping athletics within the Faculty, as part of the educational process" (Smith, G., Note 50). Van Vliet's American upbringing had shown him the best and the worst of college athletics in the United States, and he was determined that the programme at Alberta would be a unified one.

After 1950, the Deans' Council at The University of Alberta was expanded to include all Directors of Schools and Departments as well. Being a member of this council for 25 years had its advantages for Van Vliet. His political astuteness and acumen played a large role in the successful development of physical education from a one-man department to a faculty. He understood very well the roads that had to be travelled to grow and progress at The University of Alberta, and although the apparent slowness of the process often frustrated him, he was always willing to go through the appropriate channels. "His uncanny knack of knowing where the seats of power really lay has enabled him to succeed with a minimum of confrontation politics" (Williams, D.C., Note 51). This was evidence to support the claim that Van Vliet's real forte was in handling people. He spent his whole life dealing with people, and he certainly knew the ins and outs of the political system at The University of Alberta. Herb McLachlin, Van Vliet's successor as Dean, believed the best example of Van Vliet's skill in this area was the approval of the east wing of the physical education building. Once in a while in the late 1960s there was a surplus in the university budget,





and one year 2.5 million dollars was available. Van Vliet had anticipated this situation, and he had several of his staff members working on a plan for the new building. They had estimated the building would cost 2 million dollars, and they got it. "A powerful school like Business Administration has all the credentials to get facilities - we got two major buildings while that faculty didn't get any. That is a difference in leadership" (Smith, M., Note 15). The leader of Physical Education was a highly-motivated man who was devoted to the production of excellence. A former staff member, Dr. Stuart Robbins, now of York University, commented: "To move from a Department into a Faculty in a developing university was no mean feat" (Note 52).

Throughout Van Vliet's tenure at The University of Alberta, physical education enjoyed a special relationship with the Faculty of Education. In the minds of many people, education and physical education were closely linked, and in a literal sense, this was true of the situation at The University of Alberta. Although the Department of Physical Education was never officially attached to any faculty, in the early years it had very close ties with the Faculty of Education through teacher preparation. Soon after Van Vliet arrived in 1945, it was agreed that the physical and health education programmes of the Faculty of Education, together with the two staff members involved, should be transferred to the Department of Physical Education. In 1956, the B.Ed. degree in physical education was changed to a Bachelor of Physical Education degree (still technically granted by the Faculty of Education), and in 1964, physical education achieved faculty status and was able to present its own graduates for physical education and recreation degrees. The cooperative arrangement between Education and Physical Education was



advantageous to both. Myer Horowitz, former Dean of Education and currently President of The University of Alberta, observed that "we in Education benefitted from the positive attitudes that many individuals on the campus had toward Dr. Van Vliet and Physical Education, just as I am sure he and his faculty benefitted from the attitudes toward my predecessor, Dr. Coutts, who had been Dean of Education for many years" (Note 53).

Lou Goodwin was appointed in 1945 to the staff at The University of Alberta Calgary Campus which, although physically separate from Edmonton, was literally under the guidance of Director Van Vliet. Goodwin was directly responsible to Van Vliet, and while he remembered his superior as being "naturally more interested in the Edmonton scene, he did everything he could for Calgary. He gave me every opportunity to make recommendations, and he saw I got what I wanted" (Note 54). Goodwin elaborated on Van Vliet's success at The University of Alberta campus in Edmonton:

He could get everyone involved, and then go to the Board of Governors or General Faculties Council, and convince the other professors that there was a place for this so-called "frill" within the academic area of the University. That was not always easy to sell - even today. He was a master salesman. He would joke about it, he would reason about it, he would become emotional about it, but he never let up.

The University of Calgary was granted autonomy in 1966, and established its own Faculty of Physical Education in 1975.

Former Dean of Law at The University of Alberta, Wilbur Bowker (Note 55), remembered Van Vliet as a forceful and energetic person:

He wanted to make Alberta strong nationally in physical education, and he had to start from scratch. He had a concern beyond the major teams - he was trying to strengthen the programme across the board.





In whatever he did, Van Vliet showed dedication and drive. He continually set high goals for himself and his profession, and worked constantly to achieve those goals. He was rarely discouraged, in large part because his plans were always well thought out. In his own words, "The fact that we were recognized as the first Faculty in the Commonwealth was due to the fact that each brick in the foundation was laid with great care" (Van Vliet, M., Note 14). The thoroughness of his preparation caused Van Vliet to experience very few major disappointments in his professional career. Van Vliet and his staff had a tremendous job to do in terms of 'selling' physical education as a legitimate academic pursuit at the university, but they worked at it continually and although progress may have seemed slow at times, great strides forward were made. The implications of the Faculty of Physical Education at The University of Alberta were widespread. Van Vliet sought to provide a place for elitist and recreationist and those in between - everyone should be able to have the opportunity to experience physical activity at a suitable level. The balanced programme offered by Physical Education at The University of Alberta attempted to achieve that goal. The programme evolved to meet the needs of the participants, and Van Vliet was constantly reacting to changing needs.

Starting from a one-man autonomous department, Van Vliet saw his area of interest mature into a powerful faculty that was highly respected on the campus. "He had the ear of the important people, not only because he was a sportsman, but because he was sharp and intelligent and bright" (Scott, H., Note 40). Van Vliet was undoubtedly a good public relations man for his area on the campus; he was honest and forthright and people respected that (Plate 6). "He had a powerful combination of





Plate 6. Maury Van Vliet and Governor General Roland Michener at the University of Alberta Homecoming, 1970.



Plate 7. Games President Van Vliet on the cover of the CAHPER Journal, March-April, 1978.





personal charisma, energy, high motivation, and awareness of political realities" (Smith, M., Note 15). As a longstanding member of the Deans' Council and General Faculties Council, Van Vliet was seen by many as a prominent professional. Myer Horowitz observed: "It is my belief that in his final years on Deans' Council, he was looked upon by other Deans as a leader in the group" (Note 53).

The Edmonton Journal published a series of articles in 1967 about The University of Alberta. The final article in the series, printed on December 14, 1967, discussed the power and influence among faculty heads when the budget was decided:

The University doesn't have a formal long-range plan to control spending. The question of "who gets what" is therefore answered by bargaining - and it's in the bargaining process that the men of power are tested and proven.

The article listed the six men on campus who were most influential, based on reports of men long active at the centre of university politics. One of those named was Dr. Maury Van Vliet, Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education. "Alberta was Canada's first university to raise physical education to the status of a faculty, and its head to a dean; both were tributes to this man's personality and influence." Concerning influence on the campus, the article concluded: "The emphasis here is on persuasion: you can't just steamroller people. To get anywhere here, a man must have enough expertise to be respected in his field, plus the drive for personal power" (Edmonton Journal, December 14, 1967, p.4).

Van Vliet certainly had a tremendous amount of background and experience from which to draw, and his credibility as a professional was unquestioned. The gradual acceptance of physical education and recreation as academic pursuits had come slowly but surely, and the





impact of the programmes of first the Department, then School, then the Faculty of Physical Education (and later Recreation) had been felt across the entire campus. But Van Vliet saw The University of Alberta as an integral part of the larger community, and he continually encouraged his staff and students to involve themselves in outside organizations. And, being a doer, he led them by example.



## Chapter 5

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

As loyal as Van Vliet was to The University of Alberta, he saw his mandate and felt his responsibility extended beyond the confines of the university and the province. Consequently, he accepted positions of responsibility at the national level in many organizations, and was also involved in the activities of the province of Alberta and the city of Edmonton. Van Vliet's longest professional involvement was with the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER), formerly called the Canadian Physical Education Association (CPEA).

The founding meeting of the Canadian Physical Education Association was held in Toronto in April 1933. The Depression and geographic distances were two significant handicaps in developing a large membership and active provincial branches. "The total membership in the national Association was never large during the first ten years. Those who were members brought their influence to bear on their associates locally, and on the community in which they lived" (Blackstock, 1965:278).

In 1939, the Canadian Physical Education Association convention was held in Vancouver, and this provided Maury Van Vliet with an opportunity to become personally involved in the national association. The strong Pro-Rec movement in British Columbia had produced many active professionals (for a complete history of Pro-Rec, see Schrodtt, Note 56),





and UBC's Van Vliet was ready to work to establish a more viable national association.

Van Vliet was the Chairman of the 1946 President's Policy Committee which recommended that the name of the association be changed from the Canadian Physical Education Association to the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. This move was intended to "facilitate the thinking of all members of the association in regard to its function, both now and in the future" (Van Vliet, M., 1947:1, 3). The name change was adopted, and CAHPER continued a somewhat precarious existence throughout the remainder of the decade and into the 1950s. But "through Hart Devenney's term as President {1952-55} the Association began to slowly stir and flex its muscles. Lorne Brown, the next president, began a vigorous assault on the lethargy of past years that had slowed progress to a crawl" (Blackstock, 1965:288). During Brown's term as president, Van Vliet served as the vice-president for physical education, and in 1957, he was elected president of CAHPER.

In many ways, the Halifax convention of 1957 was one of the most important meetings ever held by CAHPER. Jack Passmore, a CAHPER member since 1934, stated that it was at that time that "the professional association was given new direction and purpose" (Note 57). During Van Vliet's term as president, two decisions were made regarding the future of CAHPER. Professor W. L'Heureux (Note 58), currently Dean of Physical Education at the University of Western Ontario, believed that "Van Vliet initiated probably the two most significant items of advancement toward maturity for the Association." Van Vliet proposed that the CAHPER Journal be published at least eight times a year in printed form rather than in mimeograph or multilith form, and that the Associ-



ation should hire a part-time executive secretary who would eventually fill a full-time position. Passmore remarked on Van Vliet's actions this way: "Even in those early days, he was inclined to set very high goals for himself and his profession" (Note 57).

There were undoubtedly many people at the Halifax meeting who doubted if CAHPER could achieve the goals its president had set, but Van Vliet was very eager to demonstrate that physical education, health, and recreation was growing up as a profession. Several University of Alberta staff members assumed leadership roles under Van Vliet's presidency: Don Smith became chairman of the Publications Committee and Al Affleck was named editor of the Journal. Despite Affleck's efforts, the Journal was a constant source of concern. There was a great struggle to secure appropriate articles, and the Journal continually teetered on the brink of financial disaster. Van Vliet (1957b:3-4) had the opportunity to editorialize on 'The President's Page' of the Journal, and he did not miss any chance to promote the national organization. His first message as CAHPER President was typical of many he wrote:

With the help of an excellent executive and the best committee chairman that our organization can provide I sincerely hope that we can spark the effort of all to the point where CAHPER is an organization of national prominence, giving professional service to its members and being, in turn, supported by a strong and active body of health, physical education and recreation people throughout Canada.

With statements like that, Van Vliet showed himself to be a progressive thinker, both personally and on behalf of the professional association.

A concern of Van Vliet's throughout his term as President, and one which still plagues CAHPER today, revolved around the problem of limited membership. He addressed this concern several times on 'The



President's Page', and although the membership of CAHPER has grown considerably since 1957, it may well be that the old name of the Canadian Physical Education Association more accurately reflects the membership of CAHPER today. There are relatively few health educators in Canada, and recreation is fast becoming a self-sufficient entity on the national scene with its own professional association (Van Vliet, M., Note 59). Van Vliet always maintained that CAHPER was the national voice for the profession, and he worked continuously to have the professional group respond to challenges and issues of concern to all members.

With the Journal precariously but permanently on the path to becoming a truly professional publication, Van Vliet turned his attention to the question of hiring an executive secretary. In 1959, CAHPER secured the services of C. R. Blackstock as part-time Executive Secretary, and "a year later a permanent office was established and a secretary hired to handle the details of membership and correspondence" (Blackstock, 1965:290). By 1965, CAHPER was able to employ Blackstock as the Executive Director at its national office in Ottawa.

When Van Vliet (1959c:9) presented his report as Past President to the association, he described his presidential years this way: "The past two years may not be the most fruitful years of the Association, but they certainly have been two of the most exciting." The main leadership positions in CAHPER during those two years had been filled by University of Alberta staff members, and Van Vliet made it clear that another area of the country should assume the leadership roles; his stinging humour left no doubt about the point being made: "The Province of Ontario has begun to raise its sleepy head in anticipation of taking on some of its responsibilities for national progress" (1959c:9).





There seemed to be a certain degree of optimism about what CAHPER could become, and as Jack Passmore remembered: "Maury Van Vliet's continuous drive and enthusiastic leadership brought us through those two very important years" (Note 57).

Following his term as president, Van Vliet continued to be actively involved in the organization. Both he and Gordon Wright, CAHPER president from 1959-1961, were consulted by the federal government as Bill C-131 was being formulated, An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport (1961). Van Vliet involved himself in various CAHPER committees, and in 1963, he was presented with an R. Tait McKenzie Honour Award. This award was established in 1948 to recognize the distinguished contributions of CAHPER members (Blackstock, 1965:289). Van Vliet's citation described him as a philosopher, educator, author, and administrator, and summarized his involvement in CAHPER to that point (1963:23, 38): "Dr. Van Vliet has served as President of the Edmonton Men's Branch of CAHPER, on numerous national CAHPER committees, and played a leading role in the development of the association during his term as President from 1957 to 1959."

In 1965, CAHPER sponsored and approved the publication of Physical Education in Canada, which was edited by Maury Van Vliet. Although he did not particularly enjoy the detail work that an editor must do, Van Vliet knew the actual publication of the book was very important to the field. Twenty-one professionals contributed chapters to the book, and were "selected because of their wide experience and major contributions to the profession throughout the country" (Van Vliet, 1965:vi). All royalties from the sale of the book were given to CAHPER. Although the book was intended as a basic text on the background and



development of physical education in Canada, the preface provided a clue as to its intended utility:

In 1962 the editor agreed to accept the responsibility of coordinating the efforts of various contributors toward a publication which might be expected to reflect a realistic, if somewhat sparse, overview of physical education in Canada as it has slowly expanded and developed over the years. It is hoped that this initial effort will be a mere forerunner to subsequent editions which will improve in accuracy and content to the point of properly reflecting a chronicle of the Canadian scene in physical education, athletics, and recreation (Van Vliet, 1965:v).

Van Vliet was named to the "Friends of Blackie" committee in 1974, established to recognize the contributions of C. R. Blackstock to CAHPER. Jack Passmore remembered that "Maury Van Vliet, the best known and most distinguished member of our profession in Canada, acted as Chairman" (Note 57). A surplus of money resulting from the work of the committee was used to publish all the R. Tait McKenzie Addresses given since 1952. The book was unveiled at the 1980 CAHPER Convention in St. John's, Newfoundland.

In 1977, Audrey Bayles was elected president of CAHPER. She asked Van Vliet to give the R. Tait McKenzie Address at the 1978 CAHPER convention in Edmonton, which was held in conjunction with the VI Commonwealth Conference. Van Vliet's involvement in CAHPER had been somewhat curtailed during his presidency of the XI Commonwealth Games, but he agreed to give the address (Plate 7). Ms. Bayles soon discovered that Van Vliet had named J. H. Crocker the Honorary President of CAHPER in 1959, and she decided to honour Van Vliet in the same manner.

In looking for an appropriate memento of the R. Tait McKenzie Address I felt there was no person in our midst who could fill the Honorary Presidency role of our beloved association better than our own M. L. Van Vliet (Bayles, A., Note 60).

Van Vliet entitled his R. Tait McKenzie Address "Swimming with





the Political Tide," and in that talk he summed up his views of what he had learned after 42 years in the profession (1978:9):

If we in the physical education, sport and recreation fields truly seek success in our endeavours we must take the time to become well acquainted with the operations of our governments and how they function and then join the system with dedication, diligence and persistence. No one knows what heights we might attain, because up-to-date we have not sufficiently turned our attention to working with and within the system. We need to be heard and to be felt. . . . My plea to you as professional colleagues is for more involvement. Perhaps it is time to become a sport politician, one who knows and loves sport and at the same time has the right perspective with high ideals and low costs. More control at the top will provide expansion at the bottom - the grass roots where the real work needs to be done.

Although officially retired, Maury Van Vliet continued to be active in CAHPER. In 1978, he agreed to sit on a newly-created Board of Trustees designed to establish and administer the CAHPER Trust Fund. Van Vliet's longstanding interest in the Association has not waned, and his advice is still sought by many individuals and committees within CAHPER. But Van Vliet did not confine himself to work solely within his own professional association; intercollegiate athletics in Canada was another area that was of great interest and concern to him.

In 1948, the first serious steps were taken towards establishing a truly national intercollegiate body. A five-member committee, with representatives from the University of New Brunswick, McGill University, the University of Western Ontario, the University of Saskatchewan, and The University of Alberta, was instructed to explore the possibilities of establishing a Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Organization (Loosemore, 1962:9). Dr. G. E. Hall of Western convened the committee, and The University of Alberta representative was Maury Van Vliet. Although the committee presented a comprehensive report to the 1949 meeting of the National Conference of Canadian Universities, the recommendations did



not gain the complete approval of the existing athletic unions, namely the Maritimes Intercollegiate Athletic Union, the Ontario-Quebec Athletic Association, the Ontario-St. Lawrence Intercollegiate Athletic Association, and the Western Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union. The Edmonton Bulletin (June 15, 1949, p.12) observed that Van Vliet had been lobbying for a Canadian Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Union since becoming Director of Physical Education at The University of Alberta in 1945. The Edmonton Bulletin optimistically reported that "the Conference approved in principle a report recommending formation of a CIAAU, and all that remains to get the organization functioning is the consent of the 30 member universities." That consent was not forthcoming, and no further action was taken on the national level until 1961.

One of the most active conferences in terms of encouraging the development of a national intercollegiate association was the Western Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union. Van Vliet was the president of the WCIAU in 1955-56, and he constantly supported the concept of truly national competition. Donlevy reported (Note 61):

It would appear that it was upon the initiative of the WCIAU that concrete action in the direction of a "National Intercollegiate Athletic Union" came to fruition. As early as 1955 and possibly earlier, the WCIAU minutes have recorded references to such action, primarily as a vehicle for the institution of national intercollegiate championships - particularly in basketball.

The geographic isolation of western Canadian universities may be one factor to account for the continued lobbying by the WCIAU for a national intercollegiate association. The competitive spirit in Maury Van Vliet may have led him to attempt to make his school and his conference the best, and national competition would be able to confirm or refute this belief. A degree of east-west rivalry had long been evident in Canadian





sport, and the intercollegiate scene was no exception.

In a letter written to Dr. A. W. Matthews in 1960, Van Vliet (Note 62) summarized why there was an urgent need for such a national organization:

In my opinion, there is one aspect of this whole program which simply cannot be emphasized enough. That is the conviction that the time has come for Canadian universities to give real leadership and idealism to Canadian sport. Aside from such obvious areas of influence as Canadian Government, the Olympic Committee, the British Empire Committee, and the various sports-governing bodies, there is a need for good public relations through prestige, inspirational example and national influence in such things as research and experiment in the field of sport. It is my sincere belief that this kind of public appeal, while coming from proposed numerous sources, demands a carefully worked out system of national play-downs in intercollegiate athletics.

Dr. Matthews had worked extremely hard to institute a national organization, and in June 1961, he chaired a meeting at McGill at which a constitution was formally approved, and the motion was passed to bring the CIAU into being as of October 16, 1961 (Loosemore, 1962:10).

Van Vliet served as president of the Western Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Association in 1964-65, and was vice-president from 1965-1967. He remained active on the national scene as well, constantly stressing the importance of a balanced programme. In 1966, Van Vliet was chairman of the Conference on Physical Education and Athletics in Canadian Universities and Colleges. The question of athletic scholarships and recruiting came up on several occasions, and Van Vliet's response was always the same: not in Canadian universities. In many instances Van Vliet was more adamant about this issue than many native Canadians, which was interesting considering his American background and personal experience with athletic scholarships. He stressed over and over it was the recruiting aspect of the process that was so self-





destructive. In his last newsletter as CIAU President, Van Vliet (Note 63) wrote:

As one who has fought for the principle of amateur athletics for thirty-five years in Canadian intercollegiate sport I can only say I still believe that university students should not be paid for what is one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives.

Van Vliet was elected president of the CIAU in 1969-70 and 1970-71. He was a man in an influential position, and many people listened carefully to what Van Vliet was saying. Whether one agreed with him or not, one always knew where he stood on an issue, and Van Vliet was not afraid to express his opinion. He saw the role of the CIAU on the university campus not as one of commercial venture but as an outlet for the students, supervised by coaches with academic degrees whose primary interest was improving the athlete and encouraging the sport, while fitting into the total professional programme of inter-collegiate sport, recreation, and physical education.

Van Vliet's opinions were sought whether he was in or out of the president's chair. He had strong beliefs and was willing to stand up and argue them whenever necessary. His interest in the balanced programme led him to a field in which he had less direct personal involvement but a keen interest - the broad area of recreation.

Although Van Vliet's first priority was physical education, he was in the midst of recreation throughout his professional career, and he made a continuing contribution in this area. In 1949-50, a group of physical education and recreation professionals formed the first recreation association in Alberta, the Alberta Recreation Executives Association. Van Vliet was one of the original members of the association which had a restricted membership in its first two years of existence.



In 1952, the association opened to general membership and was expanded into the Alberta Recreation Association (Note 64). In 1953, Van Vliet was chairman of the Alberta Provincial Recreation Board, as well as being a member of the Edmonton Recreation Commission in 1955-56.

In 1961, a provincial committee was established to investigate the feasibility of a degree in recreation being offered at The University of Alberta. Elsie McFarland and Maury Van Vliet were two of the members of that committee. In September 1962, the new four-year degree programme leading to a B.A. in Recreation Leadership was introduced at The University of Alberta. Van Vliet's interest in recreation went beyond the narrow scope of the university, and some of his most valuable work was done in the area of recreational opportunities for the citizens of Edmonton.

When the Royal Glenora Club was formed in 1962, it was intended as a family recreational facility. In order to ensure that all the appropriate facilities were included, the club enlisted the aid of Maury Van Vliet who came on the Board as one of the original directors and advised the builders about the various sports facilities. As Neil Primrose, another one of the original directors, stated (Note 65):

I think the building itself is somewhat a tribute to him in that we incorporated the various ideas he had to suggest, to assist the architects in the original planning and he was one of the original Directors when the club was officially opened in April of 1963.

Another group with which Van Vliet had a long and intimate connection was the Kinsmen Club of Edmonton. A group of young professionals from various fields, the Kinsmen undertook the financing of large projects, the most significant of which was the \$12.5 million Kinsmen Park Complex. As Don Eastcott, a long-time member of the Kinsmen,





recalled (Note 66):

Maury Van Vliet was the inspiring source for this project. In 1939 when this City was still a sprawling and gangly infant Maury and his good friend Clarence Richards were walking the woodlands of the River Valley. Clarence Richards had founded the Kinsmen Club of Edmonton some ten years previously. . . . Their discussion on that day centered around the growth of Edmonton and its needs. Maury could foresee the needs of such a city 40 years in the future and as they hiked he described the necessity of preserving the river valley for the recreation of future generations.

Work began on the Kinsmen Park in 1952, and the initial facilities included a picnic site, playground, two ice rinks, tennis courts, a football field, a soccer pitch, three baseball diamonds, a par 3 golf course, a basketball and volleyball area, and a grandstand equipped with dressing rooms. "Every time the project waivered, or advice and encouragement were required, Dr. Van Vliet was there leading" (Eastcott, Note 66). In 1967, the world's first municipally owned and operated fieldhouse was opened in Kinsmen Park, and in 1977, the Aquatic Center, with its four pools, was opened to the public. This sports complex currently houses fitness rooms, a restaurant, multisport areas, meeting rooms, and racquet sport courts. "The City had expanded around and far beyond that River Valley area but the facilities for this City of 500,000 were in place, thanks to the vision and inspiration and persuasion of Dr. Van Vliet" (Eastcott, D., Note 66).

In 1964, Van Vliet delivered the opening address to the Annual Meeting of the Alberta Recreation Association in which he expressed the belief that opportunity was the key word in the field of recreation. "We as professional people should put our minds to this task and set forth with clarity and confidence the things that must be planned to provide those opportunities. . . which will contribute to the enrichment of all" (Lethbridge Herald, April 24, 1964, p.14). Van Vliet and



Max Howell had taken a tour of European countries late in 1963 to observe and study the physical education and recreation systems, national sports and recreation councils, physical fitness organizations, and physical education programmes in institutions of higher learning in six countries. Several recommendations resulting from the study were submitted to the federal government for consideration.

The Canadian Parks/Recreation Association presented Van Vliet with an Award of Merit in 1969. In part, the citation read (Recreation Canada, 1970:25):

Dr. Van Vliet has been recognized at the national level for the significant contribution he has made to the academic, athletic and sports life of the City of Edmonton, the Province of Alberta, and indeed, beyond its borders. Dr. Van Vliet's participation in many community and regional projects has resulted in the betterment of the community and the residents of the city and province, through education, program and facility developments.

One group in the community which seemed to have been forgotten was the disabled athletes. Opportunities for Canadian disabled athletes were virtually non-existent in the early 1960s, and Van Vliet set out to make some changes. He was president of the Canadian Paraplegic Association in 1964-65, and served as an advisor and Honorary Chairman for ten years to the Paralympic Sports Association of Edmonton. Bob Steadward, a staff member at The University of Alberta, was heavily involved in sport for the disabled, and he encouraged Van Vliet to take part so that his experience and expertise could be put to use. As Steadward recalled (Note 67):

His involvement in sport for the disabled was as an outsider. He came in to improve the quality of administration in the organization. . . Van Vliet was involved due to empathy towards certain sports members; he had also been involved in organizations containing disabled people, and he had a close personal relationship there. I wanted to get an expert like him involved in our association.



In 1968, Van Vliet was chairman of the First National Wheelchair Games, held in Edmonton, and the facilities of The University of Alberta were used by the participants. In 1969, Van Vliet was named president of the Alberta Paraplegic Association. He was elected chairman of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association in 1974-75, and Van Vliet continued to be an active supporter of two other organizations: the Paralympic Sports Association, and the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association - Alberta Section.

The key to growth is opportunity, and Van Vliet sought to provide that opportunity for all people, regardless of age or skill level or disability. Another way in which he was able to increase opportunities was through working with the provincial and federal governments.

Active members in the profession of physical education and recreation across Canada recognized that government acceptance was an important factor in the maturing process, and Maury Van Vliet was no exception. In 1950, he was the director of a province-wide basketball school for the Health and Recreation Branch of the Department of Education, the first such clinic sponsored in Alberta. Van Vliet had completed his doctorate in education at UCLA in 1950, and his area of interest had been curriculum development. As a result, he was named chairman of the Alberta Provincial Curriculum Revision Committee for Grades 1 to 9 in 1950. From 1951 to 1963, Van Vliet served as chairman of the Physical Education Curriculum Committee for the Alberta Department of Education, and in 1956, he published a book entitled Physical Education for Junior and Senior High Schools. He also served as an official and unofficial facility consultant for many schools in the province.

The federal government consulted CAHPER Presidents Van Vliet and





Wright during the development of Bill C-131, and in 1963, Van Vliet and Max Howell were the recipients of a fellowship given by the National Council on Physical Fitness and Amateur Sport to observe the physical education and recreation programmes of selected European countries as mentioned above. The National Council on Fitness approved three fitness research institutes across Canada in 1963, all to be connected with universities; the sites chosen were Montreal, Toronto, and Edmonton. These institutes were concerned with mass fitness, and were financed by the Department of National Health and Welfare. As Bert Taylor, a former staff member of The University of Alberta Fitness Institute (Note 68) remembered: "Van Vliet played a major role by housing the Center at no cost and by involving the staff in the project."

Van Vliet had many interests in the broad professional field and he continued to assume leadership positions in various organizations throughout his career. In 1951, he was the president of the Alberta Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and in 1952, Van Vliet took on the presidency of the Alberta Basketball Association. By 1967, Van Vliet was recognized as a co-founder and charter member of the Canadian Association of Sports Sciences (Wenger, H., Note 32), and in 1974-75, Van Vliet served as president of the Canadian Council of University Physical Education Administrators. But it was to be in part through the result of a non-physical education or recreation oriented group - The Rotary Club of Edmonton - that Maury Van Vliet was to meet what may have been his most difficult professional challenge: the presidency of the XI Commonwealth Games.



## Chapter 6

### XI COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Early in 1970, a group of men approached Mayor Ivor Dent about the possibility of Edmonton hosting the 1978 Commonwealth Games. The group consisted of Hal Pawson, Alex Romaniuk, Ed Zemrau, and Maury Van Vliet. The idea had first been suggested by Romaniuk, and the other men were somewhat supportive and interested although not yet totally committed (Dent, I., Note 69). Dr. Dent suggested that the group go ahead and draw up plans, and return to him with more concrete proposals. Pawson was a City of Edmonton employee, and Dent was able to assign him almost full-time to putting the plan together. The subsequent acquisition of information was done quickly but thoroughly.

Edmonton was in competition with Toronto for the opportunity to be Canada's nominee in the world-wide bidding to host the Games. Edmonton's proposal was presented in Montreal in January 1972, by Ivor Dent, Horst Schmidt, and Maury Van Vliet. Dent was the head of the delegation and he had brought Schmidt to outline the provincial government's support, as well as Van Vliet, a well-known figure in amateur sport. The three men gave a detailed presentation, and Edmonton was approved as the proposed Canadian site.

Now a bid had to be submitted on behalf of Canada at the 1972 Munich Olympics. A larger contingent was sent to represent Edmonton at the meetings, again including Dent, Schmidt, and Van Vliet. Strong





competition came from Leeds, England, but the Edmonton group had done its homework very thoroughly, and Canada was awarded the Games. When the contingent returned home, Dent, as Chairman, appointed the Board of Directors for the XI Commonwealth Games Canada (1978) Foundation. Maury Van Vliet was appointed as a member of that Board as well as one of seven committee chairmen in the original organizing committee.

At this point, the Foundation was very much a part-time operation. Ivor Dent was the full-time Mayor of Edmonton as well as the unpaid part-time Chairman of the Foundation; the structure had not evolved to the point where a full-time person could be paid. But the job of chairman was becoming more and more time-consuming, and Dent could foresee that soon he would not be able to continue both as mayor and as Foundation Chairman (Dent, I., Note 69). Dent reluctantly gave up the chairmanship to Alex Fallow in March 1974. Fallow had been an alderman in Edmonton who was active in the Games' organization almost from the beginning. He restructured the Foundation in 1974 to form a more effective body, and Maury Van Vliet was appointed one of five vice-presidents as well as a member of the Executive Committee of the Games Foundation. Fallow was still a part-time president, but he reorganized the Games into a business organization. The Foundation hired an executive director, acquired secretarial help, and was granted the use of Donald Ross School (by the Edmonton Public School Board) as a permanent administrative site.

On February 4, 1975, Foundation President Alex Fallow resigned his position due to extreme business pressures. A selection committee was formed to find a new president, and it met only once. Maury Van Vliet was included in the short list of candidates. When approached



directly by the selection committee, he agreed immediately to take on the presidency. Hal Spelliscy, one of the five members of the selection committee said: "Van Vliet wanted it badly" (Spelliscy, H., Note 70). Van Vliet had been involved in the organizing of the bid for the Games as early as 1970. He had involved himself in the project fairly steadily since its inception. In 1975 the Foundation had reached a critical point in its development. It now needed a full-time paid president, and Van Vliet was looking for another professional challenge. In recent years his deanship at The University of Alberta had been more like housekeeping and much less exciting than in the early days (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). Budget constraints had made growth more difficult, and progress was slow in the university community.

One major factor in Van Vliet's favour of being elected president was his lifetime interest in amateur sport and physical education and recreation, in which he had displayed continuous involvement since his earliest days at school. His direct influence on the growth of physical education as a profession at The University of Alberta (and across Canada to some extent) had made him a visible figure in the field. Van Vliet had a reputation for getting things done, although his means were occasionally questioned. For several reasons, this highly regarded physical educator with a reputation in sporting circles may have been seen as a logical choice for Games' president. It appeared that the selection committee thought so, for they selected him unanimously; the Board of Directors supported him unanimously as well. "The ratification of Dr. Van Vliet's appointment by the Board Monday night had been thought to be almost automatic, but even the token opposition expected from some directors dissolved by the end of the meeting" (Edmonton Journal,



February 11, 1975, p. 37). A hint of Van Vliet's personality was given in the same newspaper article; regarding new appointments, "Dr. Van Vliet said that names of the people he wanted would be submitted to the Foundation Board of Directors 'out of courtesy' but he noted the Games' constitution allows him to name appointees without any further approval."

Van Vliet was still Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta when he took on the presidency of the Games. Very soon, he realized he was not able to do justice to both on a part-time basis, so he agreed to resign his deanship and be seconded to the Commonwealth Games Foundation while still retaining his university rights and privileges (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). The era of part-time leadership had ended. In June 1975, Maury Van Vliet became full-time president of the XI Commonwealth Games.

It was a tremendous undertaking for a man approaching retirement age, but Van Vliet had always sought professional challenges. The man chosen as president of the Games was a professional with proven leadership qualities, a highly opinionated man who had sought positions of responsibility in amateur sport and physical education all his life, who was used to being the top man in an organization, and who was looking for a new professional challenge. It was obvious that a person performing the duties of president of the Games would have to possess tremendous energy and drive; Van Vliet took on the job despite a nagging back problem. The Edmonton Journal (February 12, 1975) remarked:

Dr. Van Vliet, one of the originals involved in bringing the Games to Edmonton, needs no introduction to the master plan for 1978. It's an assignment which the record shows to be right down his alley. Maury Van Vliet's willingness to wind up his working years in a new and demanding situation is the mark of a man dedicated to





athletics, to recreation, and to his community. We wish him well as he embarks on what beyond doubt will be the most hectic years of his career (p.4).

Once Van Vliet took on the president's job full-time, he felt the pressure of making the Games a success, and he began to investigate more carefully its problems and administrative setup. The majority of the vice-presidents were already in place but, in a gesture to allow Van Vliet to start with a clean slate, they all offered their resignations. None were accepted, mainly because Van Vliet had worked closely with them when he was a vice-president, and he knew they had diverse backgrounds and were not 'yes' men. They were all outspoken and positive and successful in their own fields, and had complementary strengths: some were extremely promotional, some were analytical, some were stubborn and worked slowly, and some were almost too eager to get things done too quickly. In Van Vliet's opinion, "it made a great team" (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). As had been the case throughout his professional career, Van Vliet's policy was to get the best possible person for each job, people who had been successful in other projects. As one example, Van Vliet regarded the stadium as the jewel in the crown, so he particularly asked a member of the Rotary Club to be in charge, knowing what kind of team the man would gather around him. So this was one problem the executive did not have to deal with; they had put the situation into hands that were equally as capable or more capable than their own. The Foundation sought to acquire people who could and would run their areas as independent units.

The leadership style of the presidency was more suited to Van Vliet than was the style of university deanships as they had developed. At the university, it was becoming increasingly difficult to move very



fast. Everyone wanted to have a say on every issue. Van Vliet saw the authority of deans gradually but steadily decreasing during his tenure (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). Upon becoming president of the Foundation, Van Vliet was thrust into the fast moving world of business where situations were analyzed and then quickly acted on. The businessmen gave him a good education, but Van Vliet was often a difficult pupil because he always had to be convinced.

Van Vliet had been his own boss in his university positions from the time he arrived in Canada in 1936. He was able to run his own programme for 39 years, and was not about to change his leadership style to suit individuals in the Games' Foundation. His style of leadership has been termed autocratic, and in an organization where 'tough' decisions have to be made, Van Vliet was not afraid to make those decisions. He never hesitated when it was time for action. This personality trait caused him to be unpopular at times, but fellow professionals seemed to have a begrudging respect for Van Vliet's accomplishments. Barry Westgate, an Edmonton newspaper columnist, summed up Van Vliet in a very perceptive manner just prior to the opening of the XI Commonwealth Games (Edmonton Journal, June 24, 1978, p.A10):

He's an abrasive fellow. He's not easy to love. He's not always right. He doesn't easily admit that he's wrong. Sometimes, the social niceties, and the administrative deferences, completely elude him.

But the ultimate verdict is that Maury Van Vliet has done a hell of a job. . . . And I think it's worth saying, any number of times. To those who have followed Van Vliet's remarkable career, his success to date is not unusual or unexpected.

Budget preparation was the first task of concern for the executive. They duplicated the Christchurch Organizing Committee's plan of allowing each division and committee to set its own terms of reference. This





gave people a great sense of satisfaction, for they appreciated the fact that the executive respected their ability to do this important job. There were three major budgets prepared for the Games. The first one was a rough estimate - the Foundation did not have enough information and the directors had not been at the job long enough to make reasonable estimates for an all-encompassing budget. The executive realized within eight months that the whole budget had to be completely revised. The second budget was about 85 percent accurate, and the Foundation then went six or eight more months before revising it for the second time. This was the final budget they followed (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). It was important to get support from all three levels of government for operational costs (the Foundation already had support for capital costs) so that the budget presented would produce unquestioned integrity. On this basis, the money asked for was granted. The Foundation then endeavoured to live within its budget.

The various levels of government said they would be surprised if the Foundation could host the Games for the amount of money it had requested. But the Foundation was able to defend its budget in terms of minimum cost. The 1976 Olympics may have worked in the favour of the Commonwealth Games Foundation. The Edmonton group was asking for a 'drop in the bucket' compared to what had been spent in Montreal, and the federal government could not quite believe it. They were receptive to the requests made by the Foundation for relatively small amounts of money (Van Vliet, M., Note 71).

The budget was obviously a top priority. Budget control had always been a major concern of Van Vliet's throughout his university career, and he had established a well-deserved reputation for being



tight-fisted with money. Putting on the Games within budget was his number one priority, and being the top executive, Van Vliet could exercise some amount of control over the spending of money. "I spent a lot of my time being a wee bit of a policeman; I had to insist that things be kept reasonably under control" (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). Several members of the Foundation felt Van Vliet was shortsighted and old-fashioned about spending money, and Van Vliet thought some of these people were irresponsible in terms of funds. Although there were differences of opinion, the selection of top quality people was undoubtedly a key factor contributing to the overall success of the Games. It was evident that the Games had to be run as a business in terms of administrative techniques and budget procedures. If an 80 million dollar project was not run in a business-like fashion, it could have been in deep trouble very quickly. The eventual hosting of the Games within budget was strong evidence to support the value of business techniques in an organization of this sort.

In 1975, the members of the executive were meeting very casually once a month. Then, as they began to appreciate the amount of work that needed to be done, they met once every two weeks. By mid 1976, executive meetings were held every week. The Foundation continued to grow in size and responsibility, and the organization shifted into full-time operation. The question of money became almost an obsession with Van Vliet. He was very conscious of the wasteful spending in the Montreal Olympics and felt it had been bad for the image of amateur sport, so he did not want expenditures to get out of hand in the Commonwealth Games. Geoff Dyson, the Sports Coordinator for the Games, suggested Van Vliet attempted to be somewhat ruthless in the expenditures of the Foundation. "He often



slashed budgets which had been carefully planned by experienced and conscientious people - and inevitably, made enemies along the way" (Dyson, G., Note 72). Van Vliet can be considered a blunt man, and on several occasions the Foundation did not run smoothly. But, as Vice-President Hal Spelliscy said, "we all worked at getting along with each other because we thought the Games were more important than anyone of us individually" (Spelliscy, H., Note 73). There was definitely a team approach visible within the Foundation.

Van Vliet was not always popular as president of the Games, but he felt he was being paid to make decisions and get things accomplished, and he never backed away when it was time to make a decision. Some of his colleagues have suggested he made too many unilateral and dictatorial decisions, but Van Vliet would defend his actions by explaining these were things he felt had to be done, had to be done by him, and had to be done at the time (Spelliscy, H., Note 73). Van Vliet saw his role of president as being a decision maker, and he carried out his leadership role with confidence. He had always shown himself to be a determined, ambitious, and dedicated professional who chose to meet challenges head on. Van Vliet had always sought positions of responsibility, and he was used to functioning in the top position in an organization. As with most ad hoc groups, many strong personalities were working closely together, and several highly publicized conflicts flared up in the Foundation. There was undoubtedly a degree of professional jealousy present, and a number of resignations from the Foundation pointed to the fact that things did not always run smoothly. Previous Games had also experienced resignations, and Van Vliet was prepared for this; his own strong dominating personality allowed him to continue to function





as the president. The job of president in any organization involves a great deal of sacrifice and hard work, but it also includes the credit for a job well done. Van Vliet would take credit for the success of the Games, but always with reference to the organizing committee and the thousands of volunteers. He was the first to admit that the Games could not have been run with such a low budget without the support of volunteers. However, the man at the top is ultimately responsible, whether the outcome is successful or unsuccessful.

In July 1976, Van Vliet headed the XI Commonwealth Games Foundation delegation to the Montreal Olympics for the annual Commonwealth Federation meeting. It was there that the problems between the black African nations and New Zealand came to a head. New Zealand had sporting ties with South Africa, and in large part it was South Africa's racial policy that caused the African boycott of the Montreal Olympics. The African nations boycotted the Olympics because of New Zealand's presence in Montreal.

The Edmonton organizing committee realized that an African boycott of the Commonwealth Games would be a fatal blow. In June 1977, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London reached an accord which received unanimous support - the Gleneagles Agreement. The document stated that all the nations of the Commonwealth would actively work against sporting links with nations having apartheid policies. This agreement reduced, but did not dissolve, the threat of a large-scale boycott of the Commonwealth Games.

Van Vliet travelled to London in October 1977, to report to the Commonwealth Federation on the progress of the 1978 Commonwealth Games. In an effort to ensure that the African countries would participate in



Edmonton, Van Vliet made a two-week visit to Africa and talked with officials from 13 countries. He made it clear that the government of Canada strongly opposed apartheid policies, and that "we were extremely anxious to have all the African countries represented at the XI Commonwealth Games" (Jackson, 1980:40). In the end, the only country to withdraw was Nigeria. Uganda and Botswana did not send teams due to financial problems. Arrangements were made to fly the Commonwealth African athletes and officials directly to Edmonton following the All-African Games held in Algeria just prior to the Commonwealth Games.

As president of the Games, Maury Van Vliet found it impossible to be on top of everything happening within the organization, and he felt the best thing the Foundation could do would be to make as many careful preparations as possible over as long a period of time as was available. The key to running a successful Games lay with the selection of the organizing committee. About eight weeks before the Games opened, Van Vliet knew he was no longer in any position to control what was happening - in effect, the Games ran themselves. Each venue was operating on its own, and if the right people were not in place, it was too late. There were very few problems of any magnitude, but if there had been, the president would have been held responsible. For, as Gerald Redmond (Edmonton Journal, July 11, 1978, p.61) pointed out:

Amid all the hoopla and tension, the entrepreneurs and the pressure, the bruised egos and the personality conflicts, the myriad details and the constant clamour for attention, it is "the man at the top" who bears the heaviest individual responsibility.

Van Vliet's formula for success in the past had been to surround himself with the best possible people available, and he used the same approach in the recruitment of the Games' personnel.





The cultural programme was a new addition to the 1978 Games. The response to this programme from the Commonwealth was overwhelming, and a village for the 600 participants had to be put together from scratch. Many countries chose to send large contingents to the cultural festival, showing that there was more to the Commonwealth Games than athletic competition. It was normal and natural to 'step up a notch' and add something new each time the Games were held, and the Cultural Festival has the potential to become a very special part of the Commonwealth Games. The XII Commonwealth Games, to be held in Brisbane, Australia in 1982, is scheduled to have a large cultural component.

As the Games drew closer, people began to feel that the event was something more than a track meet - it was a sport spectacular, a sport and cultural festival, an exciting gathering of the Commonwealth 'family'. There were so many facets that interested so many people; from the beginning, the Foundation had stated it could not function without volunteers. Van Vliet roughly estimated it would have cost \$11 million if the Foundation had to pay for the volunteer help (Van Vliet, M., Note 71). But the City of Edmonton seemed to be overflowing with people who wanted to be involved, in some way, with the Games. It was an infectious kind of thing - people were very proud and very happy to be a part of the Games, and it showed.

The XI Commonwealth Games opened under bright, sunny skies on August 3, 1978, Dr. Van Vliet's 65th birthday and the first day of his 'official' retirement (see Plate 8). There was a tremendous feeling in Edmonton about hosting the Commonwealth for this festival, and there truly was an electric feeling during the opening ceremonies. Once the





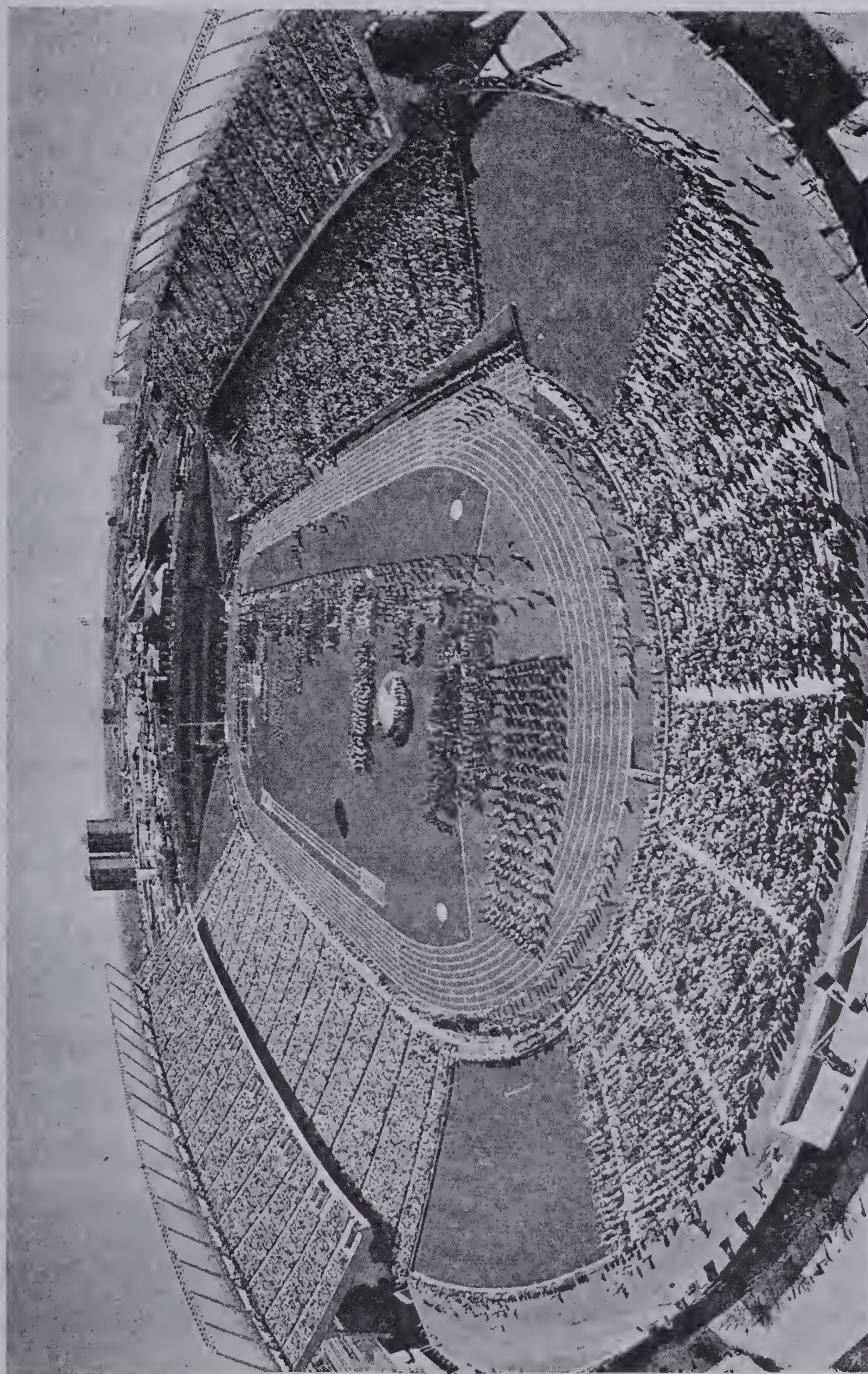


Plate 8. Opening Ceremonies, XI Commonwealth Games, Edmonton, 1978 (Edmonton Sun).





actual competitions began, Van Vliet's job changed to being intimately involved with the day-to-day concerns of the teams, and dealing with athletes was very close to his heart. All members of the executive were extremely busy during the actual days of competition, and Van Vliet's chance to be a casual spectator will have to wait until 1982 in Brisbane.

As had been the case in the past, Van Vliet had an ability to judge the job that was required as well as determine what a person was capable of doing. In many policy matters he was stubborn but not inflexible. Van Vliet had asked Chuck Moser to be the Mayor of the Athletes' Village. Moser wanted to have a pub established inside the village, and was able to convince Van Vliet that the idea could work. Moser also wanted 24-hour feeding available for the athletes, and again he was able to convince Van Vliet that the idea was a good one. In Moser's words, "I had to work hard to convince him, but he wanted me to be the Mayor and he respected my judgment because he knew I knew what I was doing" (Moser, C., Note 38).

There was a striving for perfection present in Van Vliet's activities, a feeling that more progress could be made and further goals could be reached. He was not particularly popular in the Games Foundation; he was often tougher and more stubborn than people would have liked, but that was his style of leadership. His highly competitive spirit led him to always attempt to make things the best they could be, and his constant search for new challenges had led him into the presidency of a highly successful Commonwealth Games. There is little doubt that he carried few passengers on his organizing team; he was extremely well-served, whatever the disagreements along the way.

The Commonwealth Games Canada (1978) Foundation had certainly





come a long way. Starting as one man's idea, the concept has mushroomed into a successful reality. When the Foundation reached a crucial stage in its development, Maury Van Vliet assumed the job of full-time paid president. It appeared that the right man came along at the right time into the right situation, but Van Vliet was perceptive enough to read the environment and react to the situation.

High praise was given to the Games from many quarters. Headlines such as "Fantastic, just fantastic" (Powers, 1978:F1), and "Games went like a dream" (Edmonton Journal, August 12, 1978, p.A1) were typical of the media coverage of the Games. A year after the opening of the Games, Dan Powers (1979:B3) wrote: "The athletes are gone, but the Commonwealth Games left a legacy for Edmonton - a sense of pride and accomplishment, new sports facilities and beautiful memories." Powers went on to recall the job done by the president of the Foundation: "Dr. Van Vliet, the former dean of physical education at The University of Alberta and now retired, was the man who had to orchestrate an event valued at a cost of about \$80 million, capital and operating." While Van Vliet always emphasized the team approach used by the Foundation, the ultimate responsibility for the outcome of the Games rested on his shoulders. Van Vliet was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1978, a direct result of the outstanding work he did as president of the XI Commonwealth Games.



## Chapter 7

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary and Conclusions

This study sought to record and assess the professional contributions of Maurice Lewis Van Vliet from 1945 to 1978. Analyses of four large areas of his professional involvement were undertaken: the Physical Education and Recreation programme at The University of Alberta; general campus involvement at The University of Alberta; involvement in outside professional organizations; and the XI Commonwealth Games. Van Vliet's activities in these areas were presented and discussed, and an attempt can now be made to determine his overall importance to the broad field of physical education, recreation, and amateur sport in Canada.

Maury Van Vliet, raised in the ideal sporting environment of southern California, displayed a great interest in sport and physical education all his life. After an outstanding career as an athlete at the University of Oregon, he was hired in 1936 as the Director of Men's Athletics at the University of British Columbia. In 1945, Van Vliet was appointed a full Professor and Director of the Department of Physical Education at The University of Alberta. He remained at The University of Alberta until 1975, when he was elected President of the XI Commonwealth Games Canada (1978) Foundation. The Games opened on the first day of his official retirement, August 3, 1978.

Van Vliet's entire career was devoted to the improvement in the





quality of physical education as a profession. His activities were focussed on the status of the profession at his own university, as well as on the continuing acceptance of physical education as a legitimate university pursuit across Canada. The University of Alberta was the first Canadian university to have a Faculty of Physical Education (1964), as well as the first institution in the Commonwealth to offer a Ph.D. degree in physical education (1967). Van Vliet saw the profession of physical education as including the related fields of amateur sport and recreation, and he was a significant figure in several professional organizations, including CAHPER, CIAU, Sport for the Disabled, and Kinsmen. In many ways, being president of the XI Commonwealth Games was a fitting climax to Van Vliet's long and distinguished career in the broad field of amateur sport, physical education, and recreation.

Although Van Vliet's personal life was of little concern in this study, his personality could not be separated from his professional accomplishments, and there were two aspects of his personality which helped to explain his professional contributions: competitiveness and persistence. His athletic experiences in the United States had taught Van Vliet how to be competitive - if your adversaries were tough, you had to be tougher. His competitive instincts were honed in athletics, and he transferred the same way of thinking to his career in physical education. Striving for excellence was always the goal for Van Vliet, regardless of the area of endeavour. He was never satisfied being second best in anything.

Persistence may well describe Van Vliet's philosophy of life. An anonymous quotation in the Journal of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (1958:14), located at the



bottom of 'The President's Page' by M. L. Van Vliet, summarized this philosophy:

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan, "Press On" has solved and always will solve the problems of the {human} race.

Once Van Vliet had decided to do something, he would work at it until it was accomplished. This stubborn quality did not always meet with favour, but it allowed Van Vliet to reach his goals and subsequently set new ones.

Despite the fact that his motivation appeared to have been highly personal and intense, it was directed mainly through the profession, and appeared to be, to a significant degree, outside his own personal ambition. Van Vliet's entire career was devoted to improving the quality of his profession, and he became used to functioning in leadership positions in various professional organizations. He possessed a tremendous amount of confidence in his own opinions and beliefs, and he instilled this confidence in those with whom he worked.

Van Vliet always used the direct approach when dealing with people, and this 'head-on' style worked very effectively for him. His authoritarian style of leadership was eminently suited to the post-war situation at The University of Alberta. Van Vliet had to start physical education from scratch, so he was able to design the programme he wanted and hire the staff he felt could make a contribution to that growing programme. A key factor in the rise to national prominence of The University of Alberta's Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation was that Van Vliet was able to hire the best staff members he could and then



let them continue working in their areas of specialization. At one time or another, there were some outstanding people working at The University of Alberta, and, to a large degree, that was the measure of the calibre of the administrator.

As often is the case in history, a combination of factors set the stage for the growth of physical education and recreation at The University of Alberta. The money was there, the possibilities for development were there, the moment in time was there, and along came Van Vliet with some definite ideas about where physical education should go. Van Vliet came to a situation at a time when it was ready to grow and expand, but nothing ever happens unless there are strong people in charge who believe in what they are doing and have the drive, ambition, and character to make something happen.

The University of Alberta could boast of the first Faculty of Physical Education and the first Ph.D. programme in the Commonwealth, and these can be seen as major achievements. Van Vliet's leadership was a key to the growth of physical education and recreation at The University of Alberta. He stimulated and steered the efforts of his staff, and he manipulated people to the extent that the Faculty benefitted from the success of any of its members. Van Vliet's political astuteness and acumen about campus life enabled physical education and recreation to develop into a highly-respected faculty at The University of Alberta.

In many ways, Van Vliet may be seen as a blunt man. He had some ideas as to where his profession was going, and his respect for eventual outcomes was so great that his concern for means was sometimes





in the background. He was goal-oriented, not process-oriented, and was far more concerned with the generation of ideas than with the detailed plans of how they might work. The more success Van Vliet achieved, the more his staff had confidence in his ability as a leader, and the more they trusted his judgment. But Van Vliet could make 'tough' decisions, and he was not afraid to be unpopular. At times, his single-mindedness of purpose could result in a lack of delegation of authority and responsibility on Van Vliet's part, but on the whole, his staff were pleased with the outcomes of the decisions he made on their behalf. As the Director and later Dean, if Van Vliet had waited for consensus about every issue, physical education at The University of Alberta might still be a department housed in the old RCAF Drill Hall.

Van Vliet held leadership positions in several organizations during crucial years in their development, and his ideas influenced many other professionals. He was always looking for ways to improve the present situation, and he displayed vision that very few people have. Van Vliet steered the profession in new directions, and he recognized the fact that there were many ways to legitimize the profession in Canada - teaching, coaching, administrating, publishing, researching, and speaking, to name a few. Van Vliet concentrated on the practical aspects of administering his Department/School/Faculty, and as a result, made only a small contribution to scholarly literature. As his administrative duties became more and more time consuming, Van Vliet also moved away from coaching and teaching.

When looking at his overall career, it is suggested that Maury Van Vliet did more than any other person to legitimize the study of physical education and recreation in Canadian universities. His own



Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at The University of Alberta became a prototype in Canada for facilities, undergraduate specialization, and the Ph.D. programme. Van Vliet's work in various professional organizations showed the importance he placed on his profession to improve the quality of life of all Canadians. For a man who devoted his entire career to physical education, recreation and amateur sport, it was more than fitting, as a career climax, for Van Vliet to end up as the head of one of the largest sport festivals in the world, celebrated on his 65th birthday. Van Vliet's contributions have been recognized in some quarters of Canada - he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1978, and has been awarded five honorary degrees by Canadian universities (Appendix B). Maurice Lewis Van Vliet exerted more influence on the broad field of physical education, recreation and amateur sport than did any other individual in Canada in the 35 years since the end of World War II. He was a man with a vision who was alert to opportunities, and he was prepared to work extremely hard to see that vision become a reality. More than anyone else, Maury Van Vliet showed what could be done in his profession.

### Recommendations

(1) That more biographies of Canadian physical educators be undertaken. The contributions made by individuals are an integral part of the history of physical education in Canada, and they should be documented.

(2) That studies of living physical educators be done while primary source material is readily available.





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## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX A

### Interview Question Areas



Professional Contributions of Dr. Maury Van Vliet from 1945 to 1978

Interview Question Areas

1. Length of own involvement in the environment or organization
2. Dates of involvement with Dr. Van Vliet
3. Perception of Dr. Van Vliet's motives and motivation - driving force behind his activities
4. Dr. Van Vliet's methods of getting the job done
5. Dr. Van Vliet's degree of involvement in the organization - changing over time
6. Dr. Van Vliet's major accomplishments within the organization - degree of influence on the environment
7. Dr. Van Vliet's major disappointments within that environment
8. How Dr. Van Vliet's absence would have affected the environment
9. Dr. Van Vliet as reactor or innovator in that environment
10. Dr. Van Vliet's style of leadership
11. Single most important factor in Dr. Van Vliet's success
12. Five adjectives to describe Dr. Van Vliet as a professional
13. Dr. Van Vliet's professional and personal philosophies
14. Dr. Van Vliet's overall importance to physical education, recreation, and amateur sport in Canada





## APPENDIX B

### Honours and Awards Received by M. L. Van Vliet



Honours and Awards Received by M. L. Van Vliet

- 1949 Federal Scholarship for Advanced Study (Doctoral Work at UCLA)
- 1963 CAHPER Honour Award
- 1963 National Fitness and Amateur Sport Travel Fellowship
- 1967 Centennial Medal (Canada)
- 1967 Alumnus of the Year, Citrus Community College, Azusa, California
- 1969 Award of Merit, Canadian Parks/Recreation Association
- 1969 Canadian Paralympic Sports Association Pre-Eminent Service  
Recognition Award
- 1970 Edmonton Branch CAHPER Honour Award
- 1973 Edmonton Sportsmen Hall of Fame Inductee
- 1973 Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, University of Western Ontario
- 1974 Honorary President, Edmonton Paralympic Sports Association
- 1977 Honored by the CWUAA for contribution to athletics in Canada
- 1978 Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, University of Windsor
- 1978 Honorary President of CAHPER
- 1978 Premier's Award for Excellence (Alberta)
- 1978 Officer of the Order of Canada
- 1979 Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, The University of Alberta
- 1979 Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, Dalhousie University
- 1980 Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, Queen's University
- 1980 Inducted into the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame as a Builder







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